

CHRISTIAN COURIER

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56th year of publication

Reformed Ecumenical Council appeals to Indonesian government

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The new executive committee, staff and advisors of the Reformed Ecumenical Council.

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia (REC) — The delegates to the REC Assembly meeting in Yogyakarta, Indonesia during July were intensely aware that meanwhile, in another part of Indonesia, Christian families were being killed or forced from their homes in huge numbers.

Throughout the month of July, citizens living in the Moluccas, the

spice islands of Indonesia, lived in terror as fighting raged. Thousands of partially trained warriors infiltrated the islands in response to rumors of Christians killing Muslims. These warriors were intent on violent action against the Christian communities.

The REC assembly listened carefully to accounts of Indonesians of the unfolding situation.

In an open forum, participants talked with Yogyakarta students from the Moluccas. Some Indonesian delegates to the assembly were also deeply involved, and the assembly had the benefit of information from the Communion of Churches of Indonesia.

Letter sent to president

The assembly decided to send a letter expressing their concern to Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid, to the speaker of Parliament, Mr. Akbar Tanjung, and to Kofi Anan, Secretary-General of the United Nations. The letter called attention to the recent attacks on Christians, especially in Ambon and Halmahera, in the Moluccas, and in Poso, Sulawesi. These attacks "have done great violence against Christians and forced many of them from their homes." It noted that Indonesian military personnel failed in their duty to "ensure the safety and



Nigerian delegates confer over tea.

security of citizens and their properties." It noted that some military personnel had joined in attacks on Christians, while others had joined Christian forces.

The letter acknowledged that Christians had also been violent in

this conflict. "We are deeply shocked by the misuse of religion by both Christians and Muslims in committing grave acts of violence against humanity," the letter stated. "We believe that this is

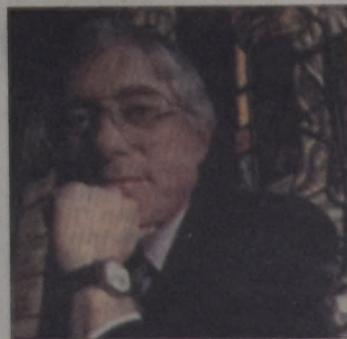
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Residential schools continue to haunt United Church

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — An awkward discussion of problems related to residential schools was a highlight of the 37th General Council of the United Church of Canada (UCC), held in Toronto in mid-August. Moderator Bill Phipps made a motion of support to the Anglican Church of Canada as it underwent eight layoffs in August, due in part to the costs of lawsuits connected to the church's involvement in the residential schools.

The motion asked "that the General Council of The United Church of Canada convey our support, solidarity, and prayers to the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada and its staff during this painful time of staff cuts, financial crisis, and overall anxiety as all of us seek God's guidance in travelling the long road to justice, healing, and



Former UCC moderator Bill Phipps

reconciliation between First Nations and Canada," reports UCC's John Asling.

Former moderator Marion Best, who was in the chair at the time, declared the motion approved based on the spontaneous applause of commissioners following Phipps' motion. But Robert

Wright of the All Native Circle Conference immediately challenged the action because First Nations people within the United Church were not consulted before it was brought to the floor.

Commissioners had heard an update on the residential school lawsuits within the Anglican Church of Canada as part of a general update by the United Church's Residential School Steering Committee.

Natives criticize motion

Jim Boyles, General Secretary of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, told the Council his church faces 350 lawsuits involving 1,600 claimants and 26 schools. He said the General Synod has assets of \$10 million and faces claims that could cost the church hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Council was reminded by several commissioners of the haunting legacy of the residential schools and of the difficulty of dealing with the issue in the United Church. The proposed motion of support and solidarity towards the Anglican Church of Canada was like "patting another defendant on the back. That concerns me," said Connie Dieter, author of *From Our Mothers' Arms*, a book about residential schools.

Dieter asked that the Residential School Steering Committee be reconstituted so that one-third of its members are First Nations persons because "I don't trust you any more."

Speaking in measured tones in both Cree and English, Nelson Hart of All Native Circle Conference challenged the chastened and quiet court to be inclusive in its decision making.

"First, consult us if it concerns us," he said. "Stop making decisions for us. We've come to a point in our journey that we have to really listen to each other."

There are currently 450 claims against the United Church relating to residential schools. The steering committee's report outlined ongoing plans for a three-part response: a program of education and advocacy, an opportunity to respond to the financial challenges facing the church, and a communication strategy.

Almost impossible job

David MacDonald, a special advisor to the United Church on residential schools and the federal government, said his job "is very close to the edge of the impossible." His work includes finding ways to construct an agree-

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News

REC 'deeply shocked by misuse of religion' in Indonesia

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against the essence of both faiths, since both advocate peace and harmony for all peoples, regardless of religious affiliation."

Appealing to both the Indonesian government and the United Nations, the letter made three specific suggestions. "We urge," it said:

- The opening of the conflict area to journalists and international humanitarian and faith-based relief agencies.

- The provision of protection and aid to victims in the conflict area and the many who have fled from there.

- The creation of an international fact-finding commission with power to investigate and

report on the situation in the Moluccas and Poso.

Day of prayer

The executive committee of the REC suggested to the member churches that they set aside Sunday, September 10 as a day of prayer for the Moluccas. The committee urges that prayers be said for "the restoration of harmonious relations between Christians and Muslims" in the Moluccas, that governments and international bodies find ways to help bring peace and relief for the victims of this unrest, and that peace and stability may come to all of Indonesia.

Close to 200 people participated in one way or another

in the REC Assembly — 102 official delegates and advisors represented member churches, while another 10 persons represented fraternal organizations and observing churches. Guests, resource persons, staff, an organizing committee, stewards and worship leaders combined to make this assembly the largest in REC history.

A well-co-ordinated team

The REC Assembly elected Dr. Kadarmanto Hardjowasito of the Javanese Christian Churches, Indonesia, as its new president. Kadarmanto is the first president from the South, or Third World. Dr. Douwe Visser of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, was elected as vice-president.

A well-coordinated organizational team from the Indonesian host churches helped the assembly run smoothly, a team that responded quickly to problems and made everyone welcome.

Growing out of workshops and a major report on racism and ethnocentrism in REC churches and communities, the assembly decided to create a Commission on Human Relations. The basic working definition of "prejudice plus power" developed in the analysis of racism and ethnocentrism was helpful in other areas of human relations, wherever there is discrimination based on ethnicity, race, sex or age. During the discussion, churches developed strategies for themselves, and the commission will help monitor the unfolding of these strategies.

For the next four years, this commission will function



REC STAFF PHOTO

A discussion among participants at the REC Assembly.

alongside the other three commissions of the REC. The three commissions are the Commission on Theological Education and Interchange, the Commission on Mission and Diakonia, and the Commission on Youth and Christian Nurture.

Focused on future

An assembly has many wonderful moments. Under the theme *Making All Things New*, this one focused on the future in the new millennium.

Many participants will remember the spirited and innovative worship experiences, led by a choir from Jakarta Union Seminary. Others will count the warm hospitality from local churches as their high point. Dozens of local churches were hosts to participants on the two Sundays of the assembly. They shared in worship, shared a meal, and shared a time of question and answer with their international

guests. Two local congregations of the host churches, the Christian Church of Java and the Christian Church of Indonesia, arranged beautiful and elaborate services for the opening prayer service and closing communion service.

Educational discussions of religious pluralism, leadership development issues, and racism challenged participants in many ways. Intensely packed with interaction, many delegates cited these as profound learning experiences.

The final business is not usually a high point, but the assembly passed many new directives for its new executive committee and the other commissions. The Racism discussion also led to the formation of a new Commission on Human Relations.

So, a frequent comment from participants, especially those who had been to more than one REC assembly, was that this was "the best ever."

REC asked to build information networks

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia (REC) — For two intense days in the REC Assembly, the participants discussed leadership development needs in the REC family of churches. They also looked at how REC shared their resources, how they planned, and how they established partnerships.

Overwhelming problems

The size of these problems was overwhelming, and few thought the council had the resources to fix these problems. However, the participants did think that the REC could become a place where information was gathered, for several purposes.

First, the assembly decided that the Church-to-Church Aid Program should end. This collection of projects raised expectations that

were seldom met and contributed little to the healthy development of REC members. Instead, the assembly recommended that the "REC function as a clearing house and information base from whence needs can be identified and possible solutions suggested."

Leadership development has as its main component some form of training. The assembly asked the Commission for Theological Education and Interchange (CTEI) to study the material concerning lay and clerical education. It further asked the REC executive committee to establish a Leadership Institute, which would provide a focus for REC work on leadership development. It also suggested the REC should not get involved in a scholarship program, but should concentrate on member

churches, helping them in connecting their students with appropriate training centres.

Many mission partnerships already exist in the REC, but these are not always known widely. There are needs that a mission partnership might satisfy, but are also unknown. The assembly asked the REC, mainly through its Commission on Mission and Diakonia (CMD) to develop "an informational database for the purpose of assisting REC member churches in understanding the bilateral and multilateral relationships that exist within the REC family," and alerting REC members to current needs. The assembly mandated that the CMD facilitate such a catalogue of needs, and network to try to meet those needs.

AIDS, drought, debt attract REC delegates' concern

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia (REC) — Church delegations from Africa spoke with some length and passion about social problems in their region at the REC Assembly in Indonesia. AIDS and drought were foremost in these concerns. Moreover, following the recent AIDS world conference in South Africa and expanded news coverage in the last year, the assembly had information about AIDS from several sources.

The delegates sent a message to their member churches, rather than asking the REC to manage something. They asked their churches to:

- provide loving counseling to all AIDS sufferers and their families,

- continue preaching and teaching the godly life'

- implement educational programs with the cooperation of other churches, NGOs and government departments (among others);

- use all possible resources and form all possible partnerships to counteract the spread of the disease,

- offer information on AIDS to the REC for dissemination to interested parties, and

- establish or improve care centers for AIDS orphans and other family members to help AIDS victims.

Finally, the assembly went on record as deplored "the unwillingness of USA pharmaceutical companies, backed by the US government, to allow drugs for alleviating the suffering of AIDS victims to be produced as generic medicines at greatly reduced cost."

The assembly asked REC members to make every effort to support people in the regions of East Africa where drought was afflicting many. Although the delegates acknowledged that short-term relief would not solve the problems of that region, they still asked the REC executive committee to "regard the situation in East Africa and the Horn of Africa as urgent" and to act as a channel for any funds donated by member churches.

Encouraging churches in difficult situations

In a few other countries, where delegates presented some information, the assembly asked REC members for support. It encouraged those churches working in the difficult situation in Sierra Leone to continue. It expressed its empathy with the desire of the people of Uganda for a just and democratic society. The assembly took note of the improvement in the political situation in Nigeria since the last REC assembly in 1996. Finally, delegates adopted a resolution of empathy with the people of Zimbabwe in their struggle for a just and democratic society.

The assembly affirmed the resolution of the previous executive committee (then called Interim Committee) in 1998 calling for forgiveness or reduction of international debt for highly indebted, poor nations. The assembly urged the REC executive committee "to continue working in the same direction" and "to strengthen their case."

News/Politics

Abbotsford farmer gets rare inside look into North Korea

James Kwantes

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — Clarence Tuin glimpsed the face of poverty during a recent trip to North Korea, and the experience made him more determined than ever to help improve the country's dire situation.

The Abbotsford dairy farmer and four other Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFB) delegates got a rare inside look at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during a recent four-day tour. "The poverty over there, that really blew me away," said Tuin, a CFB director who also represented the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee on the trip. "The

expressions on their faces told a story more than anything else."

According to the United Nations World Food Program, about 62 per cent of North Korean children are small for their age, the result of long-standing malnutrition caused by flooding, famine and a hard-line Communist leadership. In May, North Korea received about 12,500 tonnes of grain from the CFB, which is a coalition of 13 church relief groups, including the CRWRC. Tuin met some of the people and visited some of the hospitals that benefited from the aid. The situation is desperate, he said.

"As long as there's a need, you

have to reply," Tuin said. "We have a Christian obligation to respond." During a visit to one boarding school, delegation members saw school kits and blankets that the Mennonite Central Committee had sent over.

Tuin's trip to the pariah state also coincided with a historic moment: Canada's recognition of North Korea as a member of the international community. On his flight out, Tuin traveled on the same plane as North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun, who later met Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy in Thailand for the announcement of the diplomatic recognition.

While capital city Pyongyang looks like a modern metropolis (the entire city was rebuilt after the Korean War), its gleaming buildings hide a serious poverty, Tuin said. Shortages of food, medicine, electricity and fuel are common.

Complete overhaul needed

For Tuin, who runs a first-class dairy farm operation, a tour through rural areas was also revealing. He doesn't recall seeing one piece of farm equipment during the trip. "Once you get out to the countryside, you know what's wrong with North Korea," he said. He believes a complete overhaul of the country's agricultural system is needed, but he pointed out North Korea is not accepting "hands-on assistance," only food aid.

Only about 20 per cent of the mountainous country's land is arable, and agriculture has been plagued by lack of water and poor crops. The terrible conditions have led to people supplementing their meager food rations with grass, seaweed and almost anything else they can use to fill their stomachs, Tuin explained.

The contrast between the poor

country and prosperous North America hit the Abbotsford farmer hard. "We saw a two-year-old girl that weighed under 20 pounds," Tuin said. "I have a grandson about four months old and that porker weighs just about 20 pounds."

In addition to isolation because of an aggressive Communist ideology, North Korea was hit with severe flooding in 1995 followed by severe drought and famine in recent years. Tuin said delegation members were not permitted to go anywhere unaccompanied, and government minders and interpreters kept a close eye on him. "The first couple of days gives you an uncomfortable feeling, I'll tell you," he said. "We don't realize how much freedom we have."

Since 1996, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank has shipped more than 60,000 tonnes of food to North Korea. Another food shipment is being planned for next year.

Tuin has already shared his experiences and showed slides about his memorable trip at one B.C. church, and he has plans to continue talking about North Korea's needs at several others. "This is a story that has to be told," he said.

Presidential race too predictable

Knowing my American birth and my employment as a political scientist, friends and colleagues ask me around this time of an election year whether I have been watching televised coverage of the Republican and Democratic conventions. They are often surprised to hear me say no. Indeed I have not seen a U.S. political party convention in many years. It hasn't always been so.

In my youth I was fascinated by the quadrennial conventions, and much of my interest in politics grew up around them. I especially remember that turbulent year of 1968, when the U.S. was mired in an unwinnable war in southeast Asia, civil rights for blacks was still a hot-button issue, and President Lyndon Johnson announced his intention not to stand for a second term. This threw the Democratic presidential race wide open and laid the groundwork for the infamous Chicago convention later that summer. Front-runner Bobby Kennedy had been assassinated in June after winning the California primary election. Vice-President Hubert Humphrey was favored to win his party's nomination, but youth-backed candidate Eugene McCarthy was making a strong showing from the wings.

Chicago violence left deep impression

I followed the Chicago convention closely that year, though mostly over radio rather than television. The now legendary violence, largely provoked by the Chicago police, made a deep impression on me and other Americans. The convention itself was an exciting affair, and not until well into its proceedings did it become clear who would win the party's nomination for the chief executive office. I similarly followed the comparatively lackluster Republican convention in Miami, whose nominee, Richard Nixon, would go on to win the election.

At that time only a few states had primary elections, that is, pre-elections in which party members express their preferences for candidates to the various public offices. These elections were not necessarily binding on party delegates, who would still have a largely free hand when it came



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

to choosing a candidate at the convention itself. Thus it was by no means clear, going into the 1972 Democratic convention, that George McGovern would be his party's nominee.

However, after a series of reforms in both parties in the 1970s, the number of states holding primary elections expanded greatly, and the results of these elections came to be binding on the conventions themselves.

Little suspense anymore

Thus by the late 1970s there was little suspense going into either party's convention, the result having become known months in advance. The conventions continued to be held, of course, but they evolved into little more than pep rallies and splashy media events.

To be honest, I am ambivalent about this trend. I would not necessarily favor returning to the "smoke-filled rooms" of yore, where presidential candidates were chosen by fellow politicians from federal, state and local levels. Yet these are the people with whom he or she will have to work. Bypassing them entirely and making him or her directly dependent on "the people" will not necessarily make for good governance and will likely contribute to poor relations between the presidency and especially the Congress. Contrary to one-time presidential aspirant Al Smith's dictum, the cure for the ills of democracy is not necessarily more democracy.

There is a lesson here for Canadians. Yes, our system could stand to be more democratic. Our MPs should be representing our interests to Ottawa, and not Ottawa's interests to us. Yet we should avoid reforms that would turn our representatives into unthinking mouthpieces for the public will at the expense of justice and good government.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont., and is not sure he would recognize Al or "Dubya" on the street if he saw them.



Clarence Tuin on his Abbotsford farm, pointing out where he went in North Korea.

COURTESY JAMES KWANTEN/ABBOXTFORD NEWS

Editorial

Most ideas born and nurtured in universities

Harry der Nederlanden

In this issue we glance at higher education and scholarship. It's something CC actually does, or tries to do, on a regular basis. Christians in North America, not just those of Reformed persuasion but all evangelicals, spend a lot on education. This isn't always done out of "pure" motives, no more than immigration was done out of pure, religious motives, as George Vandervelde points out in his article. God builds with crooked lumber, but that doesn't absolve us of the duty to be straight.

What goes on in our institutions of higher learning should interest us, whether we are bookishly inclined or not. As Al Wolters likes to stress: "Ideas have consequences." And most ideas, like it or not, are conceived, born and nurtured in the world of the university and in those institutions that depend on the university. Eventually those ideas, if they win the minds of the intellectuals, disperse into the rest of the culture, often undergoing some sea-change in the process.

Double-barrelled terminology

The last part of the 20th century experienced one of those widespread shifts, triggered by some very abstruse, even esoteric essays written by a rather small cluster of thinkers. Almost all the lectures and papers given at the two conferences hosted last month by Redeemer (see story p.21) found it necessary to engage with those ideas. This means that some of the papers sound like high-falutin' nonsense to someone who hasn't been – painfully – introduced to the language and ideas bandied about so confidently by some of the speakers. Even some of those attending the *Open Book* conference claimed some of the terms in the titles completely baffled them.

And these were themselves university teachers. Of course, they were being a bit self-deprecating and perhaps also mocking the weakness of some scholars for double-barrelled terminology borrowed from French and German philosophers.

Tower of Babel, not ivory tower

But it is an indicator of what scholars – including "our" scholars – must deal with day by day. Some of this babel is nothing more than a feature of all specialization and professionalism. The auto mechanic has to learn the language of carburetors and fuel injectors, and the physicist the language of quantum mechanics. Yet, there's more to this wild growth of terms: the university is no longer an ivory tower in which the initiates learn to speak the language of fact and truth. It is now more like the Tower of Babel right after the confusion, when "Fetch me a brick!" might get you a shovel on the head instead.

The speakers at this conference weren't discussing sub-atomic particles or black holes; they were talking about very basic, fundamental features of our common humanity. We are all non-stop interpreters every moment of the day. Whenever we ascribe meaning, whether to things or to the actions of others, we are interpreting. It's not an activity confined to pondering over musty old books. Hermeneutics used to be the study of how we decipher ancient texts, the Bible in particular. Now it refers to the study of how human beings make sense of anything.

A life-principle of their own

However, numerous schools of thought have emerged over the last decades about how this happens, each with its own language. These schools don't just offer different "models" the way an architect may propose different drawings to a client; each school represents a different ideology, a different set of beliefs about what it means to be a human being, a different worldview. These are not drawings to be studied disinterestedly for how well they fit the landscape and the neighborhood. They are infused with the compelling force of principalities and powers. They have a life-principle of their own.

Those men and women at the conference are our soldiers in the great battle for the human heart and mind; they are engaged with the spirits of our age at a very crucial front. I'm using the metaphors of the battlefield. They are used in Scripture, but they are of questionable status in the world of scholarship. Some schools of thought reduce all matters of interpretation to a matter of power. It is the powerful in any society who determine what is beautiful, good and true, they say. Those who cling to a truth above and beyond the conflict of interpretations, therefore, shy away from the rhetoric of warfare.

Several of the participants in the conferences, thus, were looking for ways to prevent communication from becoming a matter of my traditions, my institutions, my interpretations, my truth over against yours. Our words and works must be presented in a way that does not seek to route or to obliterate the other with the superior force of our argument and rhetoric: they must serve as openings for the other to hear the voice of God. So the "how" of our communication becomes part and parcel of the "what".

Our intellectual leaders, even those in our Christian colleges, universities and seminaries, are located in an exposed, risky place. During the Second World War there were small teams of soldiers sent out called spotters. They went out beyond their own lines into no-man's land or even into enemy territory to spot where

to aim the artillery or where to launch attacks. Like the spotters, intellectuals are part of the main body of Christ, the church, but they are also outside it, part of a very powerful institution – the world of scholarship.

To make a contribution to their field, they must speak the language and observe the rules. If they don't, their work will receive little or no consideration; they will not be published or invited to speak; as a result, they will not be able to carry out the witness they are called to as professionals. As professionals they are called to do more than give the sort of personal testimony any believer can give about their personal faith in Jesus Christ; they are called to demonstrate in terms of their specific discipline that the world and human culture and history make sense only in the light of biblical faith. That is considerably more difficult.

We laymen, as members of specific congregations and denominations, want them to speak the language of our particular tradition. When we think of defending or promoting the Reformed faith, we picture that faith in terms of a certain constellation of teachings. When a Christian scholar enters into the language of her discipline and the schools of thought dominating that discipline, although she takes her faith with her, she cannot easily avail herself of the confessional and theological language of her church affiliation.

Even if she is deeply committed to being thoroughly Christian in her thinking, she finds herself using the dominant language and methods, simply to be able to function and to communicate. These will not be uniquely Christian, no matter how hard she may labor to transform her own thinking and her discipline. There will be a constant tension. Not just within herself, but also with her church community. She is conversing with an overpoweringly secular audience in their language(s). Most of us in her church community won't understand a great deal of that conversation. It sounds strange to our ears, sometimes too much like what "they" are saying, for she is using "their" language, not "ours".

One of the speakers at the conference, Mike Goheen, who teaches theology at Redeemer, gave a paper on the missionary model of contextualizing the gospel developed by Lesslie Newbigin. It helps, I think, to see the work of the Christian scholar as similar to that of a missionary, who immerses himself in a foreign culture in order to translate the good news into a different language and culture. We grant missionaries considerable space to develop new ways to make God heard and we don't expect them to say it the same way as in our culture. Yet, we support them in their efforts because we give them our trust.

Similarly our scholars need latitude to extend and translate the universal and global Christian faith beyond our confessional language into realms of learning that are not hospitable to it. In the process, it will be adulterated, compromised, synthesized even. We will hear words that make us uncomfortable, that make us question whether the truth isn't being distorted in the process. And then we will question and challenge our scholars, but in love and with encouragement.

We are not seeing much of that in recent times. Scholarship is becoming a professional ghetto. We no longer ask our scholars what in the world they're doing with all that gray matter. More and more, we are drifting into the attitude that their work has little connection with real life anyhow. That's too bad. They should be called to account. The tension between membership in the world of scholarship and in the church is good. It is also good for us, for in the process they will also be forced to call us to account, to stretch us beyond our comfortable parochial boundaries.

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Letters

Vandezande asks Mike Harris to help society's less fortunate

In the following, Gerald Vandezande shares with us a letter he wrote to Ontario Premier Mike Harris. It is part of an ongoing exchange for the premier's office has responded quite promptly to Gerald's letters in the past. Perhaps CC will be able to publish a reply in the near future.

The exchange, incidentally, is a good example of what open, democratic government is at its best.

Thank you kindly for your reply dated July 27th to my letter of July 21st. The additional information helps to answer certain questions I have. I want to understand better your government's fundamental values, long-term political goals, budget promises and fiscal priorities, particularly as they affect "the less fortunate members of our society."

I always look for humane, comprehensive policies that concretely address our neighbors' legitimate needs, that do justice to people's human dignity

and well-being, their social rights and responsibilities. Like many fellow Canadians, I am deeply concerned about the plight of the rising number of vulnerable families and voiceless children. Therefore, I greatly appreciate effective efforts aimed at systematically eliminating the wide-spread child poverty and homelessness in our province.

Specifically, will you insist at the upcoming First Ministers' Conference that the National Children's Agenda be given full consideration and active support by all our governments? Will you advocate that a Canada-wide agreement on early childhood development be reached by December 2000, with effective implementation and concerted actions in all our governments' budgets and programs in the spring of 2001? Will Ontario make definite budget commitments and immediately implement them?

In view of what I wrote you on June 30th and July 21st, I would still very much like to get a more detailed picture of how the

government's recent tax cuts for powerful corporations and wealthy citizens will clearly promote the common good, including the desperately urgent, essential needs of the many marginalized Ontarians who still are partly or entirely dependent on adequate income-security programs and enabling social-support services in order to live.

I ask you again: Will the Ontario government's regular support payments for poor people actually increase? If so, by how much? If not, why not?

Specifically, when will Ontario's social-assistance rates, which have fallen by 27 per cent (including inflation) since your government took office in 1995, be restored to their previous (minimal) levels? When will the many people who currently are unemployed or disabled (due to illness or injury) also become entitled to a fair share of the government's "taxpayer dividend" or to other, more appropriate, inclusive socio-economic and fiscal measures to ensure that these fellow citizens can more meaningfully participate in the life of our society?

Finally, would it not be wiser to take the \$1-billion the government plans to spend on the "taxpayer dividend" and invest it in the historic challenge to eliminate poverty and homelessness? What do you want the actual results for poor and powerless people to be?

I am convinced that the basic principles and practices of mutual respect and mutual responsibility, of social compassion and fiscal fairness should consistently determine our governments' immediate and ultimate political objectives. (See Appendix A — Guidelines for Public Justice) What do you think? Your forthright answers will be most helpful. I plan to share them with other concerned citizens. Thank you for your prompt response!

Appendix A: Guidelines for Public Justice:

1. Human Dignity: the right of all persons and their communities to be treated

with justice, love, compassion and respect, and their responsibility to treat others likewise.

2. Mutual Responsibility: the duty of all persons to contribute to the well-being of the community as they are able, and the duty of each community to contribute to the well-being both of all its members, regardless of their ability, and of those in the larger society.

3. Economic Equity: the right of all persons and communities to adequate access to the resources necessary for a full life, including access to worthwhile work, fair employment conditions and income-security provisions, and our communal responsibility to use such resources responsibly.

4. Social Justice: the right of all persons and communities to full participation in the life and decision-making of Canada, and to adequate access to the resources necessary for a full life, including access to adequate education, health care, housing and child care, and our communal responsibility to use such resources responsibly.

5. Environmental Integrity: the duty of all persons, communities and institutions to live in harmony with, and to practise responsible stewardship of the earth and the environment.

6. Fiscal Fairness: the right of all persons, communities and institutions to fair fiscal treatment and the responsibility of all to contribute fairly for the well-being of all.

I view *mutual respect* as a way to justice, linking people and communities through bonds of equity and fairness. Likewise, I view *mutual responsibility* as a tie that binds, linking people and communities through deeds of compassion and solidarity.

Gerald Vandezande
Scarborough, Ont.

Government action on care for the dying

I applaud the Committee for Contact with the Government for their proactive work with regard to their report "Regarding Responsibility and Community at the End of Life." I am proud of our denomination [the CRC] for getting involved in this crucial issue.

With regard to the report on "government *inaction* on care for the dying," I want to provide you with a reason for hope concerning some "government *action*" in my province of Ontario. I am also aware that the same type of action is taking place in other provinces.

Ontario government funds 22 palliative co-ordinators

In Ontario, the Ministry of Health funds the salaries of 22 palliative care pain and symptom management co-ordinators across the province.

One of our roles is to identify and develop strategies to overcome the barriers to the delivery of quality comprehensive palliative care. In addition, we are resource persons in the area of pain and symptom management for the patient/ family and service providers in the community, long term care and hospital settings.

As co-ordinators, many of us are also involved in the palliative care education initiative in which the ministry provides funding for training sessions for service providers of the multi-disciplines involved in palliative care.

Lack of knowledge in the field of pain and symptom management for the palliative patient is a large barrier in the provision of quality end of life care. For example, there are several myths associated with the use of narcotics for pain management. Our job as educators is to dispel the myths and encourage, particularly doctors and nurses, to incorporate this knowledge into their practice.

There is an increased urgency for us to focus on "dying well" particularly with a view to the movement afoot in Canada to endorse euthanasia and physician assisted suicide. The Senate End-of-Life Report of June 6, 2000 calls for a national strategy for end-of-life care to include drug and home care coverage, increased support for Canadian families taking leave time to care for dying family members, and more training and research. This report is a small beginning in de-escalating the crisis that we are facing with regards to caring for dying persons.

The following is a quote from Dr. B. J. Lapoint, president of the Canadian Palliative Care Association in response to the Senate End of Life Report of June 6, 2000: "We commend the Senate for its visionary leadership in the end-of-life crisis facing our country, leadership which we have not seen so far from the federal government. Canadians are dying in needless pain and isolation. If nothing is done, the situation will get worse as our population ages. The middle-aged are now facing the need to care for dying parents. The Senate report is a blueprint for action that must be acted on today."

We as individuals and congregations need to uphold the CCG in prayer and communal support so that this committee, along with other organizations, will be a strong voice to promote compassionate, just and respectful care for dying persons and their families.

More information about palliative care programs in your area can be found on a website such as www.palcare.org or by contacting your local hospital, hospice or Community Care Access Centre.

Ida Tigchelaar

Palliative care pain and symptom management co-ordinator for Windsor/Essex County, Ont.

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Education/News

Bill Bright to leave Campus Crusade presidency



Bill Bright

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Prayer has always been a central focus of Bill Bright's life, since he started Campus Crusade for Christ International (CCCI) 49 years ago. Recently, Bright announced his plans to step down as president of CCCI next year, to mark 50 years in that position. But prayer and fasting will continue to be an important focus for him after he steps down.

Bright made his announcement in Amsterdam July 26, just before the start of the Amsterdam 2000 conference. At the conference, he explained further about his plans for the future (as reported by Crosswalk.com): "I have accepted from God a far greater responsibility and calling than anything I have known during the almost 79 years of my life. That responsibility is the privilege of devoting the major part of my life that remains to promoting prayer and fasting worldwide.... The greatest privilege I have in life is to intercede for the members of the body of Christ, for the nations of the world and for the fulfilment of the Great Commission and all that involves." Since 1994, Bright and his wife Vonette have prayed and fasted for 40 days each year.

Bright was awarded the 1996 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, and at that time announced he would donate the money to promote prayer and fasting.

Douglass to take over

Bright has named Steve Douglass, 55, to succeed him next year. Douglass has worked for CCCI for 30 years, and is currently executive vice-president and director of U.S. ministries.

"I have thought and prayed about this decision for many years, and count it a privilege to see such a strong, devoted man respond to the challenge of leading Campus Crusade for Christ into the next



Steve Douglass

millennium," said Bright, according to EP. "My wife, Vonette, and I are fully confident that Steve ... knows and understands our movement as well as anybody, and better than most. He genuinely seeks to honor our Lord in his actions and decisions. Having been in the driver's seat for 50 years, I'm happy to pass the torch to a man whom I greatly admire and love and respect, who will do a better job than I."

Following Bright's example

Douglass disagreed with that prediction. "There is no other Bill Bright," he insisted. "Increasingly I see what it is that God has done in him and I aspire to that.... My goal is to become more like Bill, inasmuch as he is like Jesus Christ."

"I am very humbled to be selected to be president of Campus Crusade for Christ," said Douglass. "Only God could equip a person for this task, and I am well aware of that."

Douglass said he is committed to carrying on Bright's legacy, including Bright's tradition of using new technology to spread the gospel. "We must eagerly receive God's new opportunities," he said, noting that using movies to share the gospel was a new idea when Crusade's successful JESUS film was made.

One such area of future growth is the Internet, said Douglass. "I feel certain the Internet presents an opportunity we've only begun to tap," he said.

Douglass will begin working alongside Bright in a transitional role before assuming the full post on Aug. 1, 2001. Bright will retire at that time, but will continue to serve as chairman of the ministry's board of directors.

Douglass said the thing he admires most about Bright is his humility. "As I study the Scripture, that's the most essential quality of

A few secrets from campus ministries

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



"The best part," he answered, "was the duty-free on the way back."

Since then I have seen campus ministers brewing beer in their basements, sneaking Scotch into conference dorms, and dancing the night away together in front of a cash bar. If there ever were people who took Psalm 104:15 to heart, it would be university clergy. Strong creation-based theology.

To some extent, what I am describing is the old guard. They all used to be church-trained clergy, too. But the new breed of campus minister seems to be equally versed in the universe of academics. Some campus ministers have more degrees than a thermometer, and so it should be for one who presumes to shepherd the bridge between the university and the church. Knowing your theology and philosophy, plus having an expertise in one of the particular disciplines is vital to dialoguing with the diversity of worldviews that inhabit the campus.

Finally, you may have a goatee and enjoy the scotch, and you may rival Nicholas Wolterstorff in intellectual prowess, but you still require the "character" of a campus minister. You must have a love for the church and the university, for the evangelical and the mainliner, for the Muslim and the Marxist, and be able to tolerate, yea, even enjoy having them interrupt, disturb, and challenge your own reading, writing, pastoring and preaching. And in the midst of this flurry of voices you must still find space to stop, pull out of the melee, and listen — then hear — the quiet voice of the Spirit of God. Not an easy calling.

One more thing. A campus minister cannot survive, and will certainly never last, without a sense of humor. It should be first on every job description for the mission of the university campus: "Must be able to laugh, especially at himself." Maybe having a jolly beard and a drink has helped in that regard.



Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.

heart, a humble heart before God. Bill mentors all of us in that," Douglass said. "Second is his faith."

Besides his focus on prayer and fasting, Bright will also be writing curriculum and producing training videos for CCCI's International Leadership University.

"I'm working on 10 books, and have three completed," Bright told EP News in Orlando, Florida.

"Through my writing and speaking and travel, whatever I do, I want to help take this good news to everybody who will listen."

Campus Crusade for Christ International was founded by Bill and Vonette Bright in 1951. It is one of the largest non-profit interdenominational organizations

in the world. The ministry has more than 22,000 full-time staff members, 489,000 trained volunteers, and 60 different ministries dedicated to world evangelization in 196 countries around the world.

Although the ministry has grown far beyond its initial vision, Bright said campus ministry is still the primary emphasis. "The campus ministry has always been the heart of the movement, and will continue to be," he said. "Our goal is to help share the love of Christ with each student."

Marvin Kehler, President of Campus Crusade for Christ Canada, told *Christian Courier* he has great respect for Bright. "He's a visionary person," says Kehler. "He's got tremendous credibility."

His walk with God has been exemplary. He's an outstanding man of God... anointed by God."

Since Bright started CCCI, he has "basically believed in 2 Timothy 2:2," says Kehler. "One of the key contributions he's made is the Four Spiritual Laws: transferable concepts in discipling people.... He's given some very good how-to's on how to disciple."

Kehler says Bright has been "pulling the leadership together in top Christian circles," and is "very influential with top political people." But Bright is also "a very humble person," says Kehler. Bright will be completing his 50th year with CCCI next year, which Kehler believes is "a good time to hand off" his leadership.

Arts/Media

Prof helps Christians grapple with bioethics via book, Internet column

Bryan Cribb

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — In vitro fertilization. Stem cell research. Cloning. Genetic engineering. These issues may seem strange, mysterious and straight out of a futuristic movie. But in the constantly mutating world of bioethics, issues like these have become increasingly prominent and pressing.

New questions arise daily. How do Christians confront such controversies in cutting edge medical technology? Can Christians keep up with the changes? How can believers become better informed of bioethical issues?

Answering cultural quandaries

A professor at Southern Baptist Seminary Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., is attempting to answer these cultural quandaries. Through a recently released book and an Internet column, William Cutrer is providing a means for Christians to digest and subsequently respond to modern bioethical issues.

"My strong encouragement would be: don't speak first and understand later," said Cutrer. "[The issues are] not so complex that the average, well-read Christian can't understand them and articulate a position."

"I think there are some things that we can support, and there are some things that we can adamantly stand against. But we better know what it's about or we'll come off looking unintelligent, uninformed, out-of-step."

Responding to this lack of education, Cutrer and coauthor Sarah Glahn have penned a novel that both entertains and also informs about some of the most crucial ethical questions of our day. Categorized as a medical techno-thriller, *Lethal Harvest* (Kregel Publications) bases its plot on issues such as cloning and genetic engineering. While these issues are indeed urgent, they are sometimes less than exciting to the average Christian, Cutrer said. Thus, he and Glahn have tried to present them in a popular and readable format.

"Having lectured and written on those issues, I've found most people don't find them very fascinating," Cutrer said. "So recognizing that Jesus often put deep spiritual truth in story form, we thought we'd try to weave very compelling character stories."

Readers can expect to follow the lives of a journalist, her husband and two doctors in a clinic

as they try to sort through an unexpected death, some unusual research findings and some complicated relationships.

Life-or-death situations

"We want it to be an enjoyable kind of novel ... but [also one] that gets you thinking," Cutrer said. Some of the scenes are derived directly from real cases that Cutrer, a licensed obstetrician, has handled throughout his years of medical practice. "I tried to put a lot of realism into the medical side of it," Cutrer said. "My medical experience has put me in some real life-or-death situations."

Other scenes and issues in the book were based on forecasts of future medical technology. Yet, even in the year's writing time, many of those prophesies are already being fulfilled.

"We tried to project ahead as to where the science would be and guessed pretty well," Cutrer said. For instance, the cloning techniques being predicted more than a year ago were still seemingly far off. But while human cloning has not been successful yet and is still illegal, Cutrer doesn't doubt that there are places in the world that are trying.

"I hope people enjoy the characters," Cutrer said. "But I hope that doesn't cover the fact that they are dealing with some real life crisis issues that aren't out of the realm of possibility in the next few months."

Christian themes are strong throughout the novel, Cutrer said. Yet, he hopes the book will prove accessible and enjoyable to the non-believer as well. "It's the kind of book that we want Christians to be able to give their friends because it's a good read," he said.

"But you will see the gospel laid out clearly, decision-making and consequences."

Readers will not have to wait long for more novels from Cutrer and Glahn. A sequel to *Lethal Harvest* is on the way. In the meantime, those who would like to find out more about these bioethical issues can check out Cutrer and Glahn's biweekly column on the Christian Internet site, ibelieve.com.

"We'll look at dilemmas created by cutting-edge developments in science and technology through the lens of a biblical worldview," Cutrer said. "We'll explore how biotech advancements affect you and, most importantly, give you the chance to ask those top-of-mind questions that leave you baffled." For each issue, the coauthors "lay out the battle, reflect it against Scripture and then let people think about it and write us back," Cutrer said.

So far, he and Glahn have considered questions dealing with infertility, cloning issues, end-of-life decisions and the Human Genome Project. The response has been very positive. As readers pose other questions, Cutrer said he and Glahn may write articles specifically related to answering the issues raised. And as with *Lethal Harvest*, Cutrer hopes the Internet will prove to be a "readily accessible way of considering some of the tough ethical questions of our day" in a scriptural manner.

"Our hope is to stimulate deep thinking and appropriate action," he said. "In the process, we'll seek to uncover a Christian consensus in key areas and extend grace in cloudier issues."

The Omega lawsuit

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (EP)

— The Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) is being sued by a woman who claims that the idea for the successful end-times film "The Omega Code" was stolen from her. Sylvia Fleener wants the \$40 million in profits the film has reportedly made since its release last October. In a lawsuit filed in mid-July, Fleener claims that she created the film's characters in her book *The Omega Syndrome*, and that her work was misappropriated by TBN for its book and movie. TBN denies her claim.



Christy gives birth to miniseries



The cast of Christy.

(Religion Today) Fans of the canceled television show *Christy* are keeping the faith. More than 100 came to Townsend, Tenn., in July for a three-day *Christy Fest*, an annual gathering of people who appreciated the show's overtly Christian content, The Associated Press reported.

Christy was a landmark for network TV because of its portrayal of Christian faith and values, producer Ken Wales told AP. The series was based on Catherine Marshall's best-selling book about her mother's teaching experiences in early 20th-century Appalachia. "It was the first time in network television that the heroine did what she did because of what she believed," Wales said.

The show lasted only two years despite a devoted audience. Fans seeking to keep the spirit alive come to the fest to take guided tours of the old set, attend cast and crew workshops, and take part in a stage play. On Sunday morning, church bells and a piper blowing Amazing Grace call the faithful to service.

Christy will be reborn on PAX-TV. The network is filming a two-hour special for Thanksgiving and a four-hour miniseries for February, according to AP. "We pick it up where we left off," PAX's Tim Johnson said. "But it will definitely move it along." The show will have the same integrity and values of the original, he said. Re-runs of the original show will be aired on the Odyssey cable channel this fall.

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Church

Anglican Church boosts Indigenous Healing funds, cuts other programs

TORONTO — The Anglican Church will cut more than half a million dollars in grants to support ministry in Canada's north and overseas, and eliminate eight full time positions at its national office.

At the same time, grants available from the church's Healing and Reconciliation Fund, supporting work with Indigenous peoples, will double.

The reductions, amounting to about 11 per cent of the church's \$10.9 million national budget, respond to continuing financial pressure from the cost of litigation related to residential schools.

Reductions will impact around world

The impact of the reductions will be felt around the world. Grants to support ministry across Canada's north will decline by \$125,000 in 2000, with a further \$130,000 reduction recommended for 2001. Similar grants to programs in the Third World will decline by almost \$400,000.

"With these reductions we will balance our operating expenditures in the current year," said Archdeacon Jim Boyles, the church's general secretary, "but our assets will continue to be depleted to pay for litigation costs."

The church's General Synod (its national structure) and eight of its 30 independent dioceses, or regions, are named in about 350 suits for cultural, physical and sexual abuse at the schools. In some cases the church is named directly, in others it has been brought into the suit as a third party by the Government of Canada, which is also being sued.

The residential schools operated into the 1980s under government control. Churches, including the Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United Churches, participated in operating the schools until 1969.

Archdeacon Boyles said the church is continuing to urge the Government of Canada to stop pursuing lawsuits as its primary response to the more than 7,000 individuals who are seeking compensation. "We agree with the Law Commission of Canada that a redress mechanism would offer a better means of meeting the needs of people who were harmed in the schools," he said.

"We have told the government that we could make a substantial commitment, both financially and in other ways, to supporting such a redress program." There has been no response from government, he said.

The church committed itself to a new relationship with Indigenous people in 1969, when its involvement in the residential schools ended. It established its Healing and Reconciliation Fund in 1991, after hearing reports of abuses in the schools. In 1993, Archbishop Michael Peers gave an apology on behalf of the church for its participation in the schools.

The Healing and Reconciliation Fund is administered by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. It provides grants in support of community-based healing initiatives for Indigenous groups. Since its inception, the fund has provided about \$600,000 to assist with 60 healing projects. Financial support for Indigenous ministries, including the work of the Council and the Healing Fund, will increase from \$262,000 to \$547,000 annually.

The continuing drain of litigation costs and other factors have lead to the current reductions. Other impacts include:

- reduction of work in environmental and social justice areas, and reduction of support for a number of inter-church coalitions working in these areas;
- reduction in the number of pages in the national newspaper, the Anglican Journal;
- elimination of the national Resource Centre, which provided loans of videos and other resources to support parish ministries.

Ten staff positions have been eliminated at the church's national office, but two new ones have been created, leaving a net reduction of eight full-time positions. Those affected have been provided with a severance package and relocation assistance, Boyles said. The staff reductions are effective immediately; grant reductions will come into full effect in 2001, if the church's national executive committee approves the proposed budget.

Controversial motion withdraw by United Church leaders

... continued from page 1
ment with the federal government, finding ways to a new relationship with First Nations people, and developing public support.

MacDonald said there are approximately 7,000 lawsuits shared by all the churches today, but there is still no plan on the part of the government to resolve the matters.

Frustration with feds

Phipps expressed his frustration that most Canadians, including the federal government, do not seem to understand the issues that the residential schools continue to raise. He also told commissioners that the residential schools issue has had a deep impact on his term as moderator "because of the horrors these students experienced, because of the continuing effect that this has had on First Nations communities, because of the attitude of the federal government — my government — because of the indifference of many church people and most Canadians; that weighs very heavily. And mostly because of the fundamental rift which residential schools epitomize and illustrate within Canadian society."

The controversial motion of support for the Anglican Church of Canada was withdrawn after members of the church's Residential School Steering Committee met in circle with First Nations commissioners to try and reconcile the impasse. Council also agreed that from now on at least one-third of the members of that committee would be First Nations people.

Phipps, who had made the original motion on behalf of the steering committee, said he was withdrawing the motion so that the church could step back from the event and continue to walk and learn together and so that the church can continue to give leadership to the country, "which sorely needs it."

While the withdrawal of the problematic motion received near unanimous support, some in the court wondered about the effect of the whole incident on relations with the Anglican Church.

Chris Tindal of Hamilton Conference wanted to find some way to be supportive of the Anglican Church because, he said, "there are real individuals who are going through suffering."

Phipps responded that the Council's concern about the lack of consultation with First Nations people regarding the motion and regarding the effect the motion had on First Nations commissioners

should not be perceived as our having turned away from our Anglican sisters and brothers. "I don't think there is any question about (this Council supporting) people in a sister communion who are losing their jobs," he said.

A June UCC press release explained that the church is not seeking a financial "bail-out" in the wake of lawsuits related to residential schools: "The United Church of Canada has been careful within the church and in our

conversations with government to state that we are actively seeking to meet our financial obligations related to residential school litigation and that we do not anticipate having to deal with issues related to potential bankruptcy in the foreseeable future. We believe that all Canadians, as represented by the federal government, must share a considerable portion of the financial obligations that arise from litigation related to residential schools."

Pardy replaces colourful Phipps as UCC moderator



UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy, a minister from Gander, Nfld., is replacing the colorful Bill Phipps as moderator of the United Church of Canada (UCC). Pardy was elected to the position by the 400 commissioners who attended the church's triennial General Council, held in Toronto in mid-August.

In his final report to the General Council, outgoing United Church moderator, the Right Reverend Bill Phipps, spoke with passion of his three-year term, saying it had been a huge privilege to serve as moderator, and received a sustained standing ovation, reports UCC's Derek Carlisle.

A curveball

Early on in his term as moderator, Phipps said he was thrown a "curveball" because of the comments he made about Jesus to the Ottawa Citizen editorial board. "The unexpected media attention generated lively debate throughout the country and beyond," Phipps said. "People became seriously engaged in thinking about Jesus and the Christian faith. It opened unprecedented opportunities to tell

our story, to share our convictions and to challenge our society."

Litigation surrounding the church's involvement in residential schools was a constant issue during Phipps' term as moderator. In addition to making an apology on behalf of the General Council Executive in 1998, the moderator made visits to several Aboriginal communities to signal the church's willingness to "right terrible wrongs."

During her candidate speech to the Council, Pardy expressed her deep commitment to education, saying, "I have been a 'student' minister all of my life."

She described herself as a congregationalist with global and national concerns. Her experiences of ministry in rural and urban areas to people of all ages have led her to greatly love and respect the United Church.

Pardy, 58, was born in Gander, Newfoundland; she has served the United Church in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, Hamilton, and Toronto in both rural and urban settings.

Pardy says UCC needs to practise "holy manners," — the ability of members to relate to each other with respect and appreciation regardless of their similarities or differences, reports Cook. "As a church we are called to be gentle and patient and compassionate with one another."

Pardy recognizes that the church in Canada no longer has as prominent or influential a voice as it once had, but says that doesn't stop us from addressing issues, nor from acknowledging when we have erred. She says partnerships with people of other denominations and people of other faiths could strengthen the church's voice on social issues.

Church

Genocide averted in Indonesia — for now

Alex Buchan

LONDON, England (Compass) — Threats from Muslim extremist fighters to exterminate all Christians remaining in Ambon city by July 31 caused 90 per cent of the Ambonese Christians to flee to the mountains, although the army managed to prevent the threatened ethnic cleansing from taking place.

The civil war between Christians and Muslims in eastern Indonesia's Maluku Islands intensified in April with the arrival of a 3,000-member Muslim force called "Laskar Jihad." The Muslim fighters are reportedly trying to create chaos in order to force the impeachment of President Abdurrahman Wahid.

Attack during Sunday worship

A force of 200 jihad fighters did strike in Waai village in northern Ambon on July 30, attacking Christians while they were at Sunday worship. The extremists killed one woman, wounded two

others, and set fire to the temporary shelters villagers were living in. The attack was unexpected because Waai village was shelled to the ground by Muslim fighters on July 6, but the mainly Christian population refused to leave and stayed amid the rubble.

Leaders from the Maluku church had met with representatives of the British government in July in London to try and raise support for a U.N. intervention force. Between 3,000 and 5,000 people have died from the fighting, which broke out in January 1999.

Campaign of terror intensifies

The campaign of terror on Ambon has intensified in recent weeks due to two perceived factors. One is that the militants are getting their attacks in before a military emergency situation is declared. The other is that they are creating chaos to put pressure on President Wahid, who took power last October. Extremist Muslims detest Wahid — a Muslim cleric

himself — because he does not want to see religion and politics mixed. For this reason, he is popular with Christians.

However, Wahid's presidential style has been erratic and arbitrary. He has allowed the courts to initiate a lawsuit against former president Suharto for the recovery of \$400 million, but says he will pardon the former dictator no matter what the court turns up.

Wahid also stands accused of nepotism — which Suharto took to new heights — by appointing his brother to oversee the \$100 million disbursed by the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency, even though the brother has no banking experience.

Christians are calling for prayers for peace and calm. According to a Jakarta pastor, "Things will be tense this month. We must pray for a better relationship between the president and the Parliament, and pray for more effective peace-making in Ambon and other strife-torn areas."

Nigeria's vice-president supports Islamic law

Obed Minchakpu

SOKOTO, Nigeria (Compass) — In what appears to be a major government shift from opposition to the implementation of sharia, the Islamic legal system, in some northern states, the vice president of Nigeria declared that the introduction of the Islamic legal system is lawful and the wish of the people.

Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, a Muslim, declared on July 7 in Sokoto that state governments in northern Nigeria that introduced the Islamic legal system did so in conformity with the wishes and aspirations of their people.

"This is a democratic setting. They have the right to do the wish of their people and I don't think that should bother anybody," the vice president said. "There is no way you can be a Muslim and divorce yourself from sharia."

Sharia misunderstood

Abubakar added, "The sharia issue is deliberately misinterpreted by some people to bring about political crisis in the country."

According to him, sharia has been part of Nigeria's legal system, and the present controversy over it is uncalled for. He claims that the decision to announce the suspension of the implementation of the Islamic legal system in February was made to create a peaceful atmosphere

before Islamic law is implemented.

Nigeria's Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Ghali Na'Abba, also a Muslim, spoke in support of the vice president's position, saying the critics of sharia are mere alarmists.

"A lot of people who have been talking about sharia do not even understand the import of the Islamic legal code," Na'Abba said.

"What is important now," Na'Abba added, "is for us to begin to understand that, in order for us to be able to live together in peace, we must prepare to understand one another and also understand the way of life of one another."

Sharia unconstitutional

Yet the Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, Dr. Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, criticized Vice President Abubakar as a "partisan leader."

The archbishop said Abubakar's comments are bound to cause more confusion on the issue, stressing that he should not in any way threaten Christians in the country and reiterated that total adoption of sharia was illegal and unconstitutional.

"Even if the sharia system is for only Muslims, where do they place the Christians and traditionalists? Don't people have (an) option to choose which legal system should apply to them?" Okogie questioned.

The archbishop warned leaders to be mindful of their utterances and cautioned Muslims to stop threatening Nigerians over the sharia issue. "If the heavens fall over the sharia issue, it will fall on all of us," he said.

Politically motivated

Dr. Sunday Mbang, the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), said it was unfortunate that Nigeria's political leaders have been using religion to divide the people of the country. He said the action of the governors (of northern Nigeria) who had adopted the Islamic legal code were politically motivated rather than religiously motivated.

Conversions to Catholicism

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — Data collected by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops suggest that the Catholic Church in the U.S. is undergoing a surprising surge in adult conversions. Throughout the U.S. the number of adults being baptized as Catholics is up by some 10 per cent this year, and the number of Catholic adults returning to the church after being baptized as infants is rising even faster.

Haitian bishop accuses government of adopting "Cuban model"

PORT-AU-PRINCE (ZENIT.org) — One of Haiti's nine Catholic bishops has accused the government of adopting the "Cuban model" to impose a totalitarian state in the country.

Last week, the European Union, the United States, and Canada, Haiti's principal sources of aid, threatened to withdraw their assistance if new elections were not called for 10 senatorial seats that, according to the bishops, were ceded illegally to the party of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide, "Familia Lavalas," which controls the Senate.

Haitian government refuses dialogue

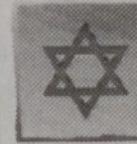
Bishop Guar Poulard, vice-president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, said he was saddened "because the Haitian government refuses to be open to dialogue with important sectors, both national and international, that have criticized the elections."

"The present government of Haiti is attempting to adopt the Cuban totalitarian regime as a model," Bishop Poulard said in Jacmel, his episcopal see. That city is also an Aristide stronghold in the southwest of the country.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Jacques-Edouard Alexis reiterated his determination to go ahead despite the objections. "Haiti is a sovereign country," he said to the mayors elected in the electoral process considered fraudulent. "We will go forward" no matter what happens.

The results of the July 9 legislative elections have yet to be officially announced. However, everything seems to indicate that Aristide won control of the legislature, and that the majority of urban and rural councils are prepared to give him decisive influence in the coming years.

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Comment/Agriculture

Ministry to Seafarers 35 years old

Rev. Hans Uittenbosch

Formally speaking, the Ministry to Seafarers — as an industrial mission — is nearly 250 years old. Biblically speaking, it is much older of course. After all, Noah was the first chaplain to a small complement of only seven people on board the Ark.

Jonah should have functioned like that as well, but despite the pagan captain's summons to offer prayer for the crew in the midst of a raging storm, he didn't get much further than a confession of sins. St. Paul, however, even though "in custody on board," did the chaplain's job in preaching, praying and prophesying.

Scriptures refer to seafarers

Throughout the Scriptures believers are alerted to include the seafarers in preaching, praying and prophesying, for they are — in a unique sense — "strangers in the gate." The Fourth Commandment refers to them. Solomon's dedicatory prayer for the Temple includes them. And God always reminds us to care for them.

The Christian Church has a long record of ministry to seafarers. The Missions to Seamen in the English Anglican World; the British and Foreign Sailors' Society in the Free Churches; the services of the Sjomanenkirke in the Scandinavian Lutheran World; the Apostolatos Maris in the Roman Catholic World; and the Society for the Promotion of the Gospel amongst Seamen in the ecumenical setting of North America established in New York in 1818 — are perhaps the most outstanding examples.

When one scans the charters of these societies, a distinct biblical and evangelical concern comes to the fore. The annual report of the

American Seamen's Friend Society, dated 1832, mentions that, "The society is reported to have planted the standard of the cross in several foreign ports, stationing the living preacher there to meet the sailor as he arrives and point him to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world."

Praying for salvation

It also notes that the Society appointed the Rev. John Diell of the Reformed Church as the first Chaplain to Seamen in what was at that time the Kingdom of Hawaii. The opening sentence of his job description reads: "Next to the keeping of your own heart, the Committee wishes to have you make the Salvation of Seamen the great object of your prayers and labors..."

This year the Christian Reformed denomination is celebrating the 35th anniversary of its Ministry to Seafarers.

In 1965 Classes Eastern Canada and Quinte had the vision: "To bring to discipleship and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ the Seafarers coming through the newly restructured St. Lawrence Seaway," and so stationed a Chaplain in the Port of Montreal and later on established the Montreal Seafarers Centre. The Ministry was broadened with an outreach by Classis British Columbia in Vancouver BC; one by Classis Southern California in Long Beach CA; one by Classis Pacific Northwest in Seattle WA; and one outreach specializing in a ministry to the officers, staff and crew members of cruise ships which started in 1992.

During these 35 years the Lord has touched the hearts of thousands of seafarers with his Word, which was distributed in the different languages of the recipients. Through his Spirit, lives have been changed, knees were bent, and heads were bowed for baptism.

And the Glory of the Lord has

come to expression with the ringing testimonies of those who have come out of their darkness into Christ's marvellous light.

Id Abbou, an Algerian Muslim Officer, conversant in Arabic and French, is perhaps a choice example.

When he was hospitalized with appendicitis and his ship had left the port, I visited him and encouraged him with prayers. Giving him a copy of the New Testament in Arabic, I suggested he begin his exploration by reading the Gospel of St. John. I also suggested that he read it three times, trusting that by the third reading the Spirit of God would have touched his heart.

At the rate of one chapter a day this would take him nine weeks....

Spirit's miraculous work

Thirty-seven weeks later I received a letter sent from Paris, where he was vacationing. It testified to the Holy Spirit's miraculous work in his heart.

Written in French it said:

Cher Monsieur,

It is with pleasure and with great joy that I am writing you this little letter to give you the news about myself and to tell you how happy I am.

Dear Sir, I do not know how to thank you for all that you have done for me. Oh, Reverend, you have saved my soul. You have brought me onto the right path, you have opened my eyes to reality by recommending that I read the Bible to learn to recognize who Christ — really — is. Today I know that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.

Jesus est seul notre Sauveur

Jesus alone is our Saviour.

May the Almighty God help us to love Him day after day.

Respectfully yours,

Id Abbou A.

The Rev. Hans Uittenbosch is Chaplain General for the International Seafarers Ministry.

On bigger barns, more manure and zoning laws for the farm

Elbert van Donkersgoed

The growing controversy in many rural communities about larger barns and associated farm practices has its roots in a deeply flawed approach to land use planning in Ontario.

Municipalities have, for decades, had the authority to regulate the use of land through official plans and zoning bylaws. The province backs up municipal regulations with policy statements designed to create consistency across the province, and to define the importance of various land uses in the overall scheme of things.

For residential housing, municipalities set aside specific areas that include space for parks, variety stores, schools, churches and other public facilities. For industrial activities, municipalities create industrial parks. For commercial activities they designate locations for stores and malls.

Changing face of rural Ontario

But, for agricultural activities, we've assumed that, wherever there is open space, farming is welcome, and if a rural landowner wants to do something different, that's OK too. Rural Ontario now has residential houses sprinkled throughout farm country, factories scattered up and down township roads and businesses dotted along side roads.

One provincial policy has sought to keep some semblance of order in this scattered rural mishmash — Minimum Distance Separation formulae. Their stated purpose? To keep incompatible uses a reasonable distance apart.

Pause on that: keep incompatible uses a reasonable distance apart. For four decades Ontario has allowed incompatible uses to mix it up in the countryside — with some distance between them. But barns have doubled in size and are doing so again. And 40,000 new families are building homes in rural Ontario annually.

Reasonable distance can't be found

In most rural communities a reasonable distance between incompatible uses can no longer be found.

Agriculture has not been given a designated area from which other uses have been told to stay clear. To this day, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs continues to operate on this deeply flawed approach to planning for agriculture.

Earlier this year OMAFRA planning experts told an Ontario Municipal Board hearing in the municipality of West Perth that existing provincial policies were sufficient tools to regulate larger farm operations. The Ontario Municipal Board in its July decision disagreed. It approved West Perth's zoning bylaw that regulates the spreading of manure, limits barn size to 600 livestock units on a site, and requires 30 per cent ownership of the land needed to apply manure.

Decisions have consequences. Ontario's policy of allowing incompatible uses to mix it up has led to the inevitable: farming has become the incompatible use in a multifunctional rural landscape.

West Perth is on the right track. Its zoning initiative is at the leading edge of helping agriculture fit into a diverse countryside. OMAFRA is living in the past.

Elbert van Donkersgoed is the Strategic Policy Advisor of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Canada.

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For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905) 682-8313, or by e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com

Education

Keeping Christian education affordable



Development professionals at a Society of Christian Schools in B.C. conference held last April. From left, Mr. and Mrs. Tim Caughey, Frank Zee, Gerry Ebbs, Helen de Boer, Janet DeVries, Jim Vander Kooij.

Helen de Boer

Have you ever wondered where our Christian schools will be in 20 years? Have you ever reflected on the journey Christian school leaders travelled to make Christian education what it is today? They worked incredibly hard, sometimes sacrificing time with their families to provide a Christ-centred education, trusting God to provide wisdom, resources and opportunity, all for the benefit of their children and God's kingdom.

Today another generation stands at the helm — leading Christian education into the future, preparing students to serve God responsibly and to advance his kingdom by equipping them with knowledge, skills, and a biblical vision for life. New approaches to leadership, administration, fund management and promotional awareness are key elements of operating today's Christian school while keeping the sound educational structure we've come to appreciate.

Where to from here?

So where do we go from here? Currently, school boards and administrators struggle with enrolment increases, and others struggle with enrolment decreases. Structures built in the '50s and '60s have reached their life span. Many are bursting at the seams or in need of major repair, forcing the urgency of immediate action.

Earlier this year, CC featured the building campaign for Smithville District Christian High School, which raised \$1.65 million in just 10 weeks for their major addition to be completed September 2001. Trenton Christian School moved into a brand new facility just last fall while

Calvin Christian School, Hamilton is currently constructing a new facility to replace their old one with a move-in date set for September 2001. Christian school communities stand in awe, giving glory to God for the blessings of volunteer time, talents, and money generously donated.

As changes occur within the Christian school societies, fund development is receiving a heightened awareness. Six years ago, Henry Contant took on the task of developing funds for Abbotsford Christian School in B.C. while completing a Master's degree in administrative leadership. He wrote his thesis on "Developing Communities of Support within the Christian School System." Now Contant serves as the Development Co-ordinator of the Society of Christian Schools in BC (SCSBC), working with school boards and committees in the areas of financial administration, long range planning, fundraising and public relations. His job includes speaking engagements in the U.S. and Canada, as well as a three month tour to Christian schools in Australia set for January.

What was originally the initiative of one school became a ministry in sharing the vision of Christian school development globally.

Need for development programs

Often a narrow perspective of funding limits the vision for expansion of educational programs and facilities. There is a lack of education in stewardship and the biggest reason donors are lost is that they don't know what the money is being used for.

What can we do? We need to get excited in our community

about how our schools are impacting children's lives for Christ. We need to get excited about Christian education and what's going on inside our classrooms. We need to focus on what we have in Christian education and not on what we don't have.

Five Key factors in a development program:

1. Articulate the school's vision.
2. Build and nurture authentic long term relationships.
3. Share and practise a biblical view of stewardship.
4. Develop, implement, evaluate and revise the schools' long-range plans.
5. Raise short- and long-term funds.

By building relationships we are building friendships for Christian education. When we see them in terms of building friendships, fundraising events become more exciting and they create community. Everyone has the opportunity to bring others into a relationship with our school and in that way we become ambassadors for Christian education. Each and every person can become a friend-raiser.

The Christian schools in Eastern Canada are not far behind their BC counterparts. In 1994, Christian schools in the Niagara region appointed a long range planning committee to address fund development for their five schools. The Foundation for Niagara Christian Schools (FNCS) was established and received its federal charter four years later. This charitable organization is financially supported by the Association for Christian Education in St. Catharines, Dunnville

Christian School, Wellandport Christian School, Niagara Association for Christian Education (Fruitland/Smithville Campuses) and Smithville District Christian High School. It operates under the direction of a governing board and of a development director, Helen DeBoer.

Wills and planned gifts

The objective? To promote gift giving by making a charitable bequest through a will, or planned gift. Such gifts enable the Christian school to reduce tuition and they provide funds for capital campaigns.

The concept of charitable giving in estate planning is not unfamiliar to us. Christian Stewardship Services (CSS) received its federal charter in 1976; it has long served people in practical ways with retirement planning, estate and will planning, personal finances, and charitable giving. Today, under the direction of Henry Eygenraam, CSS works across Canada, serving many clients each year and managing over \$12 million in planned gifts in many forms. Willard Vander Ploeg, CSS representative explained how the Society for Christian Schools in BC joined CSS as a sponsored organization last year.

"The benefits of a sponsored organization like SCSBC allows their member schools full access to CSS services," explained Vander Ploeg, who spends his time speaking with boards and finance committees to guide them in planned giving. He also offers services to the supporting communities for personal financial planning. Currently 20 Ontario Christian schools have joined CSS for their long-term fund management.

More giving for first time

National magazines and newspapers are printing more and more stories about philanthropy and big donors. People are energized. More and more are giving for the first time. Tax regulations have made it easier to give donations in various forms, such as RRSPs, stocks, and other securities. Large donations motivate others to give by establishing a base of credibility. Another major factor is the aging baby boomers with money, who are increasingly inclined to donate funds to causes that are dear to their heart. These donors are sophisticated; they want to be consulted and to know the impact of their donations. But the number one reason people give is that they



Henry Contant

are asked.

For too long we have been reluctant to speak about money. Too silent. Did you know that Jesus discusses money in 16 out of 38 parables? In fact, one of every ten verses in the gospels has something to say about finances. While the Bible includes about 500 verses on prayer, there are more than 2000 verses dealing with money and material possessions. Clearly, stewardship is an important aspect for Christians and Christian schools.

For the past six years SCSBC has hosted a Financial Stewardship Development Conference for Christian school leaders such as board members, public relation committee members, capital campaign volunteers, administrators, and development co-ordinators.

They learn how to engage community support for a vision of education that honors Jesus Christ in all aspects of its operation, including financial stewardship.

This fall Contant will be part of a similar conference in Ontario hosted by Foundation for Niagara Christian Schools. The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) set the groundwork when Contant spoke at their annual meeting two years ago. Dr. Adrian Guldemond, Executive Director of OACS is supportive of the two-day conference recognizing the need in

Ontario's Christian schools.

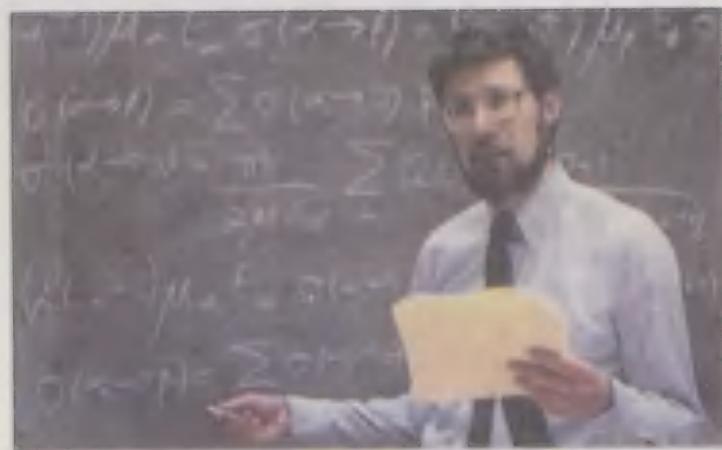


Helen DeBoer is Development Director for the Foundation for Niagara Christian Schools

Ontario Christian School Development Conference, Crieff Hills Christian Conference Centre, Puslinch, Ontario Wed. Nov. 22 – Fri. Nov. 24, 2000.
Ph: 905-304-0172, E-mail: foundation@primus.ca

Education

Why go to a Christian college?



MURKIN/DOUG PHOTO BY DALE H. BRUNCE

Ought every appropriately talented Christian who is interested in pursuing engineering as a vocation go to a Christian college for such study?

Charles C. Adams

Are there two kinds of knowledge — one dealing with facts, the other dealing with opinions? I raise that question because it seems like our culture has presupposed an affirmative answer to it. But I believe that accepting that answer has led many Christians to unchristian conclusions on a variety of topics.

The Lord created us as whole persons. No one works, learns, or thinks only in the realm of logic.

In a recent discussion with my Engineering Department colleagues at Dordt College, we were trying to develop solid, reasonable arguments for why a student who is interested in engineering ought to study at a Christian College. That's usually not a very difficult task for us, since we believe that there are many reasons and are involved on a daily basis in working them out. But we wanted to be sure that we had a common, well-articulated rationale for the many high school students and their parents who visit us each year while deciding where they should go to college.

In the course of our discussion, we asked, "Ought every appropriately talented Christian, who is interested in pursuing engineering as a vocation, go to a Christian college for such study?" In particular, we considered that unique Christian young person who has already determined, while in high school, her specific area of interest, who feels called to a vocation in that field, and who is eager to begin the kind of specialized learning needed for that kind of service. Is it possible that such a person may benefit

more from going to a state university where she can immediately get into that area of specialization?

Less room for electives

You see, at a Christian college, the undergraduate engineering program will usually be more general than at a state university. There will be required courses in the humanities and social sciences that are not required at the university. Consequently, the Christian college student will not have as much room in her four-year schedule for highly specialized, technical electives.

Well, as you might imagine, I have an answer to that question. And, also as you might imagine, it's that the Christian college offers a better engineering education than the state university, and *every* Christian ought to choose to go to a Christian college. But I won't spend the rest of this essay writing about how the general engineering education found at a Christian college is more holistic, more effective, more human, and consequently more obedient than the specialized engineering education of the state university.

What I want to consider is how it is that such a question can arise in the first place. That is, what is it that might make us think that a specialized university education could be as good or better for a particular Christian student than a more general Christian college education?

Recall that at the beginning of this essay I asked, "Are there two kinds of knowledge; one dealing with facts and the other dealing with opinions?" If we believe that there are two kinds of knowledge, then it might be possible to reason as follows: A student who has grown up in a Christian family, had the benefit of Church, Sunday school and Christian education,

whose faith is strong and who feels called by God to serve in a very technical area of engineering, and finally, who has a great deal of interest in math and science but not much interest in courses like English and history, would benefit from what the large university has to offer.

2 + 2 always equals 4

After all, two plus two equals four is the same for the Christian as the non-Christian, and therefore the engineering courses at the Christian college cannot be very much different from those at the university. And the university has a much greater variety of technical courses, with millions of dollars worth of high-tech equipment as well. So the technically talented Christian might even be guilty of hiding those talents by choosing to go to a Christian college instead of the university.

Well, let me say unequivocally that such reasoning is seriously flawed in more ways than I can possibly address in this essay. But I do want to point out one serious flaw that is not often or easily seen; and it has to do with this notion of there being two kinds of knowledge.

Cold logic

If you are familiar with the old TV series, *Star Trek*, you will remember that the two main characters, Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock, are almost exact opposites in their ways of thinking. Mr. Spock, represents the cold logic that supposedly characterizes science. Captain Kirk, on the other hand, represents the fallible, emotional, sometimes tragic, but often heroic thinking that seems to



Captain Kirk (right) and Mr. Spock, are almost exact opposites in their ways of thinking

depend more on impulse than logic. At times it is the cold logic of Spock that saves the day. At other times, the passion or compassion of Kirk triumphs where logic fails.

What is consistently portrayed episode after episode, however, is the notion that there are two ways of thinking. One is based on cold, hard, logic, the other is based on softer stuff: feelings, opinions, and beliefs. And the majority of television viewers accept it all, without so much as a blink.

That is why it is possible for some Christians to consider studying engineering at a state university. They tend to think that the experience will be mostly logical, without much in the way of feelings, opinions, or beliefs. But that is terribly false. The Lord created us as whole persons. No one works, learns, or thinks only in the realm of logic. Mr. Spock is fictional. And there are not only two kinds of knowledge, rational and emotional, there are many other kinds. And when a real live human being engages in thought,

all the different ways the Lord gave us to think are active.

So here are two concluding thoughts that may be helpful whenever you hear of a Christian contemplating going to a state university to study science or engineering. First, no matter what you study, science or philosophy, engineering or poetry, every aspect of your thinking will be active and you will grow logically, socially, ethically, aesthetically, emotionally, and so on. Second, to study in an environment that you believe only teaches you to think logically, is to close your eyes to how that environment must necessarily teach you to think regarding other aspects of your life. It's like Daniel getting his education in Babylon but remaining oblivious to the fact that King Nebuchadnezzar had a penchant for building golden images.

Charles C. Adams teaches engineering at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Free post-secondary education

Ron Gray

Now that the three big banks have decided that student loans are too risky, the Federal Government has an opportunity to do something new, innovative — and right: provide free post-secondary tuition for those who are qualified to receive it.

University education is an investment in the nation's future, as well as the student's. What is the difference, today, between a high school education and a university education? What makes one free and the other expensive? And why should students have to go \$50,000 to \$100,000 into debt to get that education?

Tuition grants for qualified students

Instead, the Federal Government ought to make tuition grants available to qualified students, directly from the Bank of Canada. The grants ought to be redeemable at any college or university that is a member of the AUCC (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada).

There's a historic precedent for the issuance of interest-free public funds for a common purpose. In the 1920s on England's Channel Islands, the independent government of the Isle of Man was flat broke, and the dykes were being eroded by the turbulent waters of

the English Channel. If the erosion wasn't stopped by placing stone rip-rap on the dykes, the island would be severely diminished and/or badly flooded; it might even have disappeared.

So the Manx Government issued currency with which to pay the workers who built up the dykes. The government validated the currency by guaranteeing to accept it in payment of taxes.

Classical economists said, "The government issuing that money will cause inflation." But it didn't. Why? Because the money the Manx Government put into circulation not only saved the island, it

Continued on page 13...

Education

Reasons for governments to support school choice

The following is an open letter drafted by the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools. It speaks for itself, so I print it without further preamble.

An open letter to the Cabinet Education Committee, Ontario Government (June 15, 2000)

To all members of the Cabinet Education Committee (Baird, Clark, Coburn, Cunningham, Ecker, Flaherty, Marland, Sampson, Snobelen.)

Napoleon had it right. Twice. "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

"Give me your schools and I'll have your nation."

It's time for us in Ontario to catch up with the rest of the western world and fund educational choices – for our own good.

With these cryptic truisms, the diminutive Emperor captured the essence of education. The family context is paramount and the goal of education is citizenship. In practical terms we would say parents have the right and responsibility to direct the education of their children, and government has the right and responsibility to establish standards for an education which will protect and promote the public interest. In a democratic society neither of these principles ought to be up for debate. The question is: How can we ensure parental rights in education and at the same time realize the public good through

education? By considering three factors – parental responsibility, constructive citizenship, and educational diversity – and their relationship.

Parents have the primary responsibility for their children. Parents are mature citizens entitled to make decisions on behalf of their children relating to their health, welfare, and lifestyle, all of which relate to the education they choose. Parents often choose a certain school for one of three reasons: religious perspective (e.g. Christian schools); pedagogy (e.g. Montessori schools); a particular program or feature (e.g. private boarding schools). In making their choice, parents expect their children to be educationally prepared for a life of constructive participation in society no less than parents who send their children to public schools. It is safe to say that all parents hope their children will live healthy, happy, productive lives, and their choice of schooling is part of making that hope a reality. There is no tension between parental choice of schooling and meeting the public interest.

Not only public schools meet public interest

The public interest can be defined as that which contributes to the welfare of the general population. The public interest is realized when young people are



Schoolchildren in New Zealand. The Fraser Institute's research shows choice of schools in New Zealand has a positive impact on student learning and parental satisfaction.

on the value of school choice stated, "In both the United States and New Zealand, researchers have measured the effects of school choice on student learning and parental satisfaction. In both countries, evidence suggests [school choice] is having a statistically significant impact on both." In fact, the Fraser study lists "a wide range of benefits: greater responsiveness of schools to parental concerns, greater awareness of educational issues, and a more dynamic, innovative and equitable education system." Governments in "choice" jurisdictions have maintained their strong commitment to public education, at the same time recognizing the benefits of the variety of means by which students receive an excellent education. This is not an either-or issue.

More community involvement

A 1996 study by the United States Department of Education (cited in *First Things*, April 1999) showed school choice families have significantly higher rates of community involvement than public school families. The evidence showed independent schooling families "are consistently more involved in a wide spectrum of civic activities than are families of public school children. From voting to volunteering to visiting the local library..."

The case is clear. Educational choice benefits society. Government support for all students receiving an education that meets the standards is a public good. It's time for us in Ontario to catch up with the rest of the western world and fund educational choices – for our own good.

In your role as a member of the Cabinet Education Committee, I call on you to change the terms of reference for educational reform in this province. It is time to stop thinking about public education as the only entity in the educational landscape. As a matter of fact, the logical conclusion of the government's own policy would be to consider students, not systems at all, when dealing with educational matters.

Free post-secondary education

... continued from page 12
made possible (by preserving the productive farmland) the creation of new wealth to back the currency. (It's important to understand that money is not wealth; money is only a medium for the exchange of wealth.)

Government-created cash

A similar investment of government-created (not bank-created) money would add to the nation's capacity for wealth creation by training new intellectual capabilities for the new information economy.

The money should be provided by the government to qualified

students, redeemable only for tuition, fees, books, room and board at a recognized university or college. Allowing students to direct the money to the campus of their choice would also introduce the element of market "supply and demand" motivation which the education establishment badly needs. As universities compete for the voucher dollars, students – and the nation – would benefit as universities would seek to earn their support.

Ron Gray is the national leader of the Christian Heritage Party

educated for a life of responsible, constructive participation in society. In this province, there has been and continues to exist a myth that the public interest is only met through education in the public schools. In truth, public schools are only one means of realizing the public interest in education. The attributes of constructive citizenship include in random order, contributing to the economic welfare, respecting the rights of others, obeying the laws of the land, and taking part in the democratic political process. Government has the task of establishing standards of literacy, numeracy, and civic-mindedness which, when met, will contribute to the development of these desired attributes. Students achieving those standards through their education will be well prepared for a life of responsible citizenship.

Providing choice in education seems to be firmly entrenched in the variety of publicly-funded alternatives found in Toronto alone. There are programs for children of native Canadian status, for gay and lesbian students, for those of African and Ukrainian descent, for those seeking French immersion, and so on. Diversity in education, that is, programs suited to specific and identifiable groups of students, is clearly preferred – after all, these choices are funded by government. Supporting this premise is the evidence from

western Europe, New Zealand, the United States, and the other five large provinces, all jurisdictions where governments support not only alternative programs in public systems, but a wide variety of educational choices.

Four propositions

So what do we have here? We have three propositions which inescapably lead to a fourth. (1) Parents have the responsibility to direct the education of their children; (2) Government has the responsibility for establishing standards for an education which will protect the public interest; (3) The existence of government funded alternatives validates diversity in education for realizing the public good. The unavoidable conclusion is (4): *It is in the best interest of society for government to support all students receiving an education that meets the standards for realizing the public good.*

There is tangible evidence to support the logical conclusion. Hard data from those jurisdictions listed earlier shows that school choice is a positive thing both educationally and culturally.

The Government of Alberta Private Schools Funding Task Force Report (1998) stated, "...private schools meet a public good, they meet the needs of certain students, they reflect the diversity of Alberta society, and they provide choices for parents." The Fraser Institute's 1999 study

Labor Day

This union has 22 minutes

Doug Ball

If you think unions haven't done anything for Canadians, better dust off your high school history textbook. Its pages are smeared with the blood and sweat of everyday working people like yourself who fought to bring us medicare, UI, workers' comp, the 40-hour work week, and health and safety standards.

People want choice, real choice. They don't want to be, nor should they be, forced to join a union in order to earn a living.

Flip to the twenty-first century and the pages being written are of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) cannibalizing 30,000 Service Employee members or Buzz Hargrove, the "scab," working from a Sutton Place hotel suite so he won't have to cross the picket lines of striking staffers.

This is what the Canadian labor movement has come to. When brother eats brother, and when the image staring back in the mirror has become the enemy, unions have 22 minutes.

That's about all the time Canada's working population wants to give these guys. If it weren't for anti-democratic, closed shop practices and the huge number of public-sector employees legislated into unions, many unions would be confined to the history textbooks already.

Don't celebrate feuding

If you're jumping up and down at that thought, don't. Labor feuding isn't something to celebrate. The loss of the union movement in Canada is not a good thing. Not for you, for me, or for Canadian companies. There are lots of new, difficult challenges that require imagination and determination, lots of new opportunities for a renovated union movement to do what a union is meant to do: serve and protect workers.

But renovating the union movement is going to take some doing. We're not talking about just ripping up a few rotten boards here. The antics of the CAW are only examples of how far removed unions have become from the average worker.

What's really causing the public mood to turn sour on unions? Three things.

Flight from fundamentals. In the very early days, unions were



INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT PREVENTION ASSOCIATION

In labor relations the atmosphere is ripe for trying new ways of relating to management and union members.

concerned with winning human dignity for workers. That included giving workers a voice in what they do and how they do it, that their workplace be as safe as it can be, that they are paid decent wages and benefits, and that their work is meaningful, not just a means to a paycheque.

High-profile social issues

For many unions, these fundamentals have taken a back seat to higher profile social issues that don't directly relate to the workplace. But the majority of workers don't want their unions to think for them on social or political causes or spend their dues on activities in support of such. They didn't vote the union in to be a mouthpiece for the NDP or the latest social cause. They voted because they wanted help in their workplace and were willing to pay dues for the services of a competent organization that can make their working lives better.

Abuse of power. To those who have it, power can be addictive. Unions are not immune. Opposition to a free choice among unions or blocking the right to opt out of union membership is a denial of worker democracy. People want choice, real choice. They don't want to be, nor should they be, forced to join a union in order to earn a living.

But unions such as the CAW don't want anything to do with real

choice, which is why Buzz Hargrove's statement that the raiding of Service Employee members was an issue of "worker democracy" is so laughable. The fact is they don't hesitate to bring out the jack boots to intimidate unions with a different philosophy and style of representation or individuals who dare disagree. Think back to the treatment some Ontario teachers received when they dared cross picket lines in 1998.

Us against them. Most in the Canadian labor scene fervently embrace the us-against-them mentality. Working cooperatively with management is seen as fraternizing with the enemy. They need to wake up and realize that the labor relations environment has changed. Just as the court system is casting about for better, non-adversarial ways to settle civil disputes, so too in labor relations the atmosphere is ripe for trying new ways of relating to management and union members.

Many unions, far from being a progressive part of the solution, are now staunch defenders of the problem.

Full-scale renovations needed

If unions are to make a difference in the working lives of most Canadians today and tomorrow, they need to win back respect. That means full-scale, knock-down-the-walls renovation

of unions. Some are beginning to catch the drift that they need to change, but unless the big union brass decide to take the labor movement forward into the twenty-first century, unions will slowly vanish.

So what can unions do to recapture the respect of yesteryear and make a difference to the working lives of Canadians? Here are four ways in which unions can make a difference.

Get workers involved. Unions can make it easier for members to participate in the workplace, provided that management is prepared to accept labor as an equal partner. It's not a difficult sell. Workers want a meaningful say in decisions that affect their jobs. And most managers want to pick the brains of their workers because they know best how to do the job. Unions need to get past their management-is-the-enemy mindset and start initiating co-operative efforts, rather than putting up roadblocks.

Provide new services. The workforce is being fractured with flex and contract workers who don't fit the nine-to-five mold. Many will work in several different jobs in different fields over a working life. For unions, that means providing new, different services to meet the needs of this expanding segment of the workforce.

Unions can re-invent themselves

Unions have a chance here to re-invent themselves, to again become the common denominator. Previously, union solidarity was achieved by painting management as the common enemy. On the workplace battlefield, members rallied round the union standard. In the twenty-first century, workers should be able to rally round a union standard of service excellence, a place to turn to for help in training, safety, benefits, pensions, workplace advice, and career counseling.

Apply broad solutions. Many labor relations issues cannot be resolved on a case-by-case basis but require broader solutions. In some situations, it makes sense for unions to pool resources to effectively help workers in a given sector — particularly in the service industries — where the union option is otherwise not viable.

Encourage diversity. A healthy labor relations environment has a diversity of unions representing different approaches that workers can choose from. Competition among unions is a good thing for workers and, ultimately, for the union movement. When workers can take their dues dollars to the union that gives them the most bang for the buck, then we'll see unions being innovative and truly service-oriented. Real choice helps keep unions accountable.

In a super-union environment, workers have to contend with not only the corporate boss, but also the corporate union boss. Will individual concerns be addressed in the big corporate/union boardrooms, or easily overlooked in power-brokered mega-deals?

In such an environment, workers get short-changed — only 22 minutes for every hour. They need and deserve the full 60 minutes. But they'll only get it when union leaders set aside their political posturing and stop focusing on social causes that have little to do with the workplace and get back to the fundamentals of the union movement — caring for the dignity of each person in the work community.

Representing members is hard work, often demanding, at times unsatisfying. That's what unions are about. Those that don't make their members a priority, aren't going to last more than 22 minutes, let alone 22 years.

Doug Ball is Director of Support Network for the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

Sports/News

Sold out**After the Buzzer**

Maybe you grabbed a copy of the *Courier* and sat down to read it on your deck. The sun is out. You have a couple of smokies on the barbecue. And what's this? Antonides is writing about hockey again? It seems like only yesterday that New Jersey and Dallas were fighting it out in the finals. Seems a little premature to be talking about hockey.

Hardly. The pre-season starts next month. I'm not that interested yet, but I have been doing a bit of thinking over the summer about the last hockey season. I remember hearing a lot of criticism in the spring about the amount of overtime hockey that people had to endure. I heard one guy on TSN, for example, complaining that hockey was becoming too defensive and too slow. He felt it was time to introduce shootouts instead of overtime periods. He pointed out how NHL hockey trailed well

behind the rest of the major team sports in TV audience. Long overtime periods was one of the reasons for this, apparently.

Poor job selling its soul

I don't know if he has a point or not. I do know this, though: the real reason the NHL is behind the rest of the pro sports in TV ratings is because it's done such a poor job of selling its soul.

If the NFL big boys were in charge, we'd have to sit through two-minute warnings at the end of each period. Put the home-run crazed baseball people in control, and we'd have goalies like Belfour and Brodeur standing helplessly in front of soccer nets.

Our frozen game stays frozen in time. That's part of what makes it so great.

Those long overtime periods of pure desperation this past spring? How long do you suppose they might have been dragged out under the NBA's system of timeouts? You can't match the tension of overtime playoff hockey.

In baseball, a sport that claims that anything can be possible on any given pitch, the home crowd can never have its heart torn in half quite like when an opposing forward snaps a puck past the home goalie in overtime. In baseball, the home team always gets a chance to answer.

Pure bliss or absolute despair

In basketball, the decisive moment could only happen at the buzzer, and you can always see the buzzer coming. Not in hockey. The moment could arrive at any time. Just around the corner or an hour from now. But it will be decisive. Pure bliss or absolute despair. And it won't be a 20-yard screen pattern that gets one team in position for an overtime field goal (to be preceded, of course, by two timeouts).

It's great to see that the NHL is not selling out the heart of its game to improve ratings. The changes that have been made, such as the two referee system and the skate in the crease rule, have been implemented to improve the integrity of the game (not to appease corporate desires).

Let's face it. We live in a world of sell-outs and compromises. Our Christian communities struggle with issues of integrity too. Christian schools allow companies like Coke to advertise in their hallways in exchange for a new scoreboard. They call it stewardship. Some of us buy groceries on Sunday because that's when we have the time. Besides, those grocery store clerks have to work on Sunday anyway, right? Some call that logic.

There's no end to compromise. At least the NHL realizes that maintaining its guts and heart is actually a good thing.



Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

Bishops of Mexican State of Chiapas call for end to violence

SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS, Mexico (ZENIT.org) — The three dioceses of the Mexican state of Chiapas published a pastoral exhortation before the gubernatorial elections held August 20.

In the text of the exhortation, the bishops of the Catholic jurisdictions of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Tuxtla Gutierrez, and Tapachula, appealed to voters to make this appointment with the ballot box "a decided step toward peace and reconciliation."

Bishops urge participation

The four-point document reminded all citizens and Catholics to participate actively in the elections. "Those who don't vote place this decision in the hands of someone else, with whom perhaps they do not agree, because they do not represent the just interests of the majority." In the recent federal

elections, 65 per cent of those registered voted, but only 51 per cent of Chiapas' inhabitants went to the polls.

Apathy is 'anti-Christian'

The bishops recalled that the elections of July 2 took place in a climate of peace and tranquility; they exhorted the state's inhabitants to join forces "to construct the Chiapas we desire, where there is respect for the dignity of the person, avoiding all forms of manipulation, pressure, threats and, above all, apathy and indifference, which, as we have said on repeated occasions, are immoral and anti-Christian."

"The public is very conscious of Chiapas' image. May nothing stain the present electoral process. Let us uproot violence and lying forever, because they destabilize and cause so much harm. We must guard the democratic path that we

have already begun; we must be the first to see that the forthcoming elections are carried out in peace, honesty, and transparency."

During a press conference, Bishop Felipe Arizmendi Esquivel of San Cristóbal de las Casas said that he hoped it would be possible for a meeting to take place between Mexican President-elect, Vicente Fox, and Subcommander "Marcos," leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (ELZN). This armed movement captured six cities in the state of Chiapas on January 1, 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement came into force.

The Mexican press reported that Bishop Arizmendi said that "it would be best if the Mexican army stayed in the barracks on the day of the elections, as it did on July 2, because, in this way, the climate of participation we are all trying to promote will benefit."

From the yakuza to Mission Barabbas

TOKYO, Japan — A Japanese gangster who became a Christian is converting other criminals. Hiroyuki Suzuki takes the Christian message to railway stations and public squares using his notoriety to grab attention, according to the *Times of London*. He has numerous tattoos and several amputated fingers attesting to his previous allegiance to the yakuza organized crime organization.

Group of reformed gangsters

Suzuki, 44, is the founder of Mission Barabbas, a group of reformed gangsters who have embraced evangelical Christianity. His ministry includes fervent preaching, songs, and faith-healing. The yakuza includes 80,000 gang members involved in extortion, rackets, prostitution, and gambling, and bloody shoot-outs on the streets are frequent.

Christianity is considered a mysterious sect by most Japanese, and only 1.5 per cent of the population is Christian. But Suzuki's church in Tokyo overflows on Sundays and attracts converts by targeting his former colleagues and apprentice hoodlums, the *Times* reported. In four years, he has baptized seven members of crime syndicates and persuaded them to leave the underworld.

Suzuki dates his conversion to a point when he was deep in debt, taking drugs, and plagued by illness. He put a gun to his temple

but didn't have the nerve to pull the trigger. His estranged wife had been an ardent churchgoer and, out of desperation, he sought refuge in a church.

"I told the minister I was a gangster who had done time, deserted his wife and child, and was beyond redemption. But the

minister talked to me about God's love and the meaning of the cross," Suzuki told the *Times*. He returned to his family and was accepted immediately.

"That made me believe in the existence of unconditional love and the fact that people can start over again."

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News

International conference invigorates Christian scholars and educators



IAPCHE PHOTO

100 scholars and educators from 28 countries and five continents attended the IAPCHE conference at Dordt College.

Cara Miedema DeHaan

Christian higher education got a boost for the new millennium at an international conference held at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, three weeks ago. The college campus took on a decidedly multicultural flavor as close to one hundred scholars and educators from 28 countries and five continents converged to discuss the theme, "Challenges for Christian higher education in the 21st century."

The conference, held from August 12-16, was organized and sponsored by the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education, or IAPCHE (pronounced ee-AP'-chee — something akin to a sneeze). IAPCHE was established in 1975 at a conference of Reformed institutions in South Africa and is dedicated to the idea that Christian scholarship should be undertaken in obedience to God's revelation in Jesus Christ and should serve the welfare of humankind.

Community of scholars

According to its basis statement, "The IAPCHE is a worldwide community of scholars and institutions that provides a

network which, through academic activity, helps people to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in an integral way." IAPCHE membership is currently comprised of 275 individual members and 31 institutional members.

"God is here, and that to bless us! With the Spirit's quickening power! See the cloud, already bending./ Waits to drop the gentle shower." These words, sung at the convocation by Emmanuel Ayee of Accra, Ghana, signaled the beginning of what was indeed a Spirit-filled conference. Whereas the five previous international conferences of IAPCHE had been dimmed by competing priorities, cultural barriers, and hidden agendas, this conference was characterized by authentic interaction, hopeful collaboration, and joyful celebration.

25th anniversary

The celebration was evident already during the 25th anniversary dinner held before conference proceedings began. In his commemorative address, inaugural member Bennie J. van der Walt,

emeritus director of the Institute for Reformational Studies and professor emeritus of philosophy at Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education in South Africa, remembered with honesty and pain the conflicts in IAPCHE's past, particularly over apartheid.

But he concluded joyfully, "In spite of our troubled, tension-ridden history, IAPCHE survived! Ultimately it was through the grace of God. But at the same time, I think, it was because of a deep sense of spiritual unity which could not be annihilated by our fights. Let us build on this hidden strength in the future!"

Discussion of future

It was discussion of this future — which in the last few years had again become uncertain this time due to lack of motivation and funds — that dominated the conference agenda. During the first half of the conference, participants discussed and listened to presentations about the challenges currently facing Christian higher education in the various regions of the world. The second half of the conference was dedicated to strategizing sessions, in which conferees deliberated over the future vision and work of IAPCHE. Their creative ideas served as fodder for the draft of a ten-year plan, which was presented to the conferees at the concluding session of the conference.

Charged with passion

Conferees agreed that the atmosphere was charged with a certain passion. Lynn Otto, IAPCHE's office manager, commented, "The interaction among scholars and educators from around the world was such a powerful part [of the conference] for everybody. It was the getting-to-know one another, the getting-to-care for one another, that made people want to continue IAPCHE and talk about how we could help each other with regional challenges."

John C. Vander Stelt, who has attended every one of IAPCHE's international conferences and currently serves on its Executive Board, shared during the closing session, "Of all the IAPCHE conferences, this conference, for me, has been the most gripping... Five years ago, I thought I was on a sinking ship. But now I think we're setting sail. You," he told the IAPCHE members gathered, "have blown air into the sails. Our hearts have been revived."

Quiet before storm of action

Vander Stelt, professor emeritus of theology and philosophy at Dordt College, was still excited days later. "At the conference, we saw the conferees own the association, make it their own," he said. "I thank God that people are taking hold of the vision. There was an openness [among the conferees], a vitality, a spiritual quiet comparable to the quiet before a violent thunderstorm — that is, before a time of action."

Vander Stelt emphasized that IAPCHE members are ready to get busy. "There was a clear mandate from the conferees for the IAPCHE Board to be creatively busy, to act boldly and joyfully."



Lynn Otto (left), IAPCHE's office manager, speaks with Rev. John Hulst, IAPCHE's executive secretary, and John C. Vander Stelt (right).

Directed by the ten-year plan, the Board will focus particularly on ways to increase the IAPCHE membership and strengthen the identity and functionality of its five regions: Africa, Asia/Oceania, Latin America, Europe, and North America.

Vander Stelt identified the wave of (spiritual) development in Africa and Latin America as one reason that participants desire action. "Now we're seeing second and third generations of Christians," he said, "who have resolved for themselves the basic issues of Christianity and are ready to ask, 'Now, what are the implications of Christianity in areas such as economics and politics?' These scholars are taking seriously Jesus' mandate to 'teach them to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:20)."

Sidney Rooy, professor emeritus of Church and Mission History at several Latin American universities, agreed with Vander Stelt. "I am very thankful that the influence and convictions of IAPCHE members have grown to the point that we have defined specific programs, programs that will serve, first, to deepen our convictions and roots; secondly, to declare ourselves and carry our convictions on to a broader group; and third, to establish growth in our different regions."

Autonomy for regions

Rooy's third point echoed a theme developed throughout the conference: conferees desired that regions be given autonomy and responsibility, that the action steps developed by IAPCHE be truly global in nature, that First World countries not dominate but rather partner with other regions.

The IAPCHE conferees clearly desired to serve Christ and each

other with faithfulness and justice. If the Board can convert these desires into viable action steps, then the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education has a bright future. James De Jong, president of Calvin Theological Seminary, encouraged conference participants during morning devotions, "When we submit and are obedient, then God will do some amazing things. Then we will step on the academic scorpions and slay the intellectual snakes of this age. Then education will be transformed."

IAPCHE will move into the future under the talented leadership of John B. Hulst, president emeritus of Dordt College. Hulst took over as Executive Secretary in 1996 and has since helped IAPCHE struggle back from near dissolution. Hulst reflected after the conference, "This conference was set up to answer if-and then how-IAPCHE would continue. So, to see the participants get into the issues and give input was really thrilling for me. The participants said, 'Yes, we want to go into the future. And we want to go together.' I-we-will be very busy."

For further information about IAPCHE or to become a member, see their website, www.iapche.dordt.edu, or e-mail iapche@dordt.edu. You may contact IAPCHE c/o Dordt College, 498 Fourth Avenue NE, Sioux Center, IA, 51250. Phone: 712-722-1530

Cara Miedema DeHaan is a recent graduate of Dordt College with a major in philosophy and communications. She is working for the Dordt College Voice while pursuing an additional major in English.

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History

Faith between Crate and Kingdom

God builds with crooked lumber

George Vandervelde

In a previous article, I suggested that in packing the big crate marked:

VanderKuyper
Edmonton, AB
CANADA

faith played an important role, though it was likely more of a supportive than a leading role. What happened to this faith once these emigrants had unpacked the wooden crate and transformed it into a shed or outhouse?

Re-centering

The immense challenge of settling in a strange country, adjusting to an alien culture, and learning a new language forced the immigrants back to the basics, a deepened reliance on God. If faith took a back seat for the venturesome emigrant, perhaps it shifted to the driver's seat for the dislocated immigrant. The church played a crucial role within the immigrant community, especially in the early years. For the newcomers, the church became the social hub, the place where the joys and struggles of settling were exchanged. Of course, the church was far more than a community centre. The church was the place where the familiar songs of faith, the good news of God's covenant faithfulness, had a chance to take ever-deeper root. The familiar religious practices, initially in the mother tongue, provided an island of stability in a sea of change.

Yet, the church wasn't a tranquil island, lying there, beckoning the voyagers to come and rest. The island itself had to be constructed, so to speak. The new immigrants faced the immense challenge of building up local congregations. The need for all-hands-on-deck brought to the surface the leadership gifts of those who, in the old country, may not have been called upon to be elder and deacon, let alone lead worship services in their "vacant" church.

In a congregation that did have a minister, the pressing needs of the moment brought with it a deeper bond between the immigrant congregation and its pastor. He inevitably became immersed in the immediate necessities of daily life: a job, bread on the table, a roof over one's head (sometimes the slant roof of a slightly gentrified chicken coop). "Dominee" became more truly a minister, thus serving more effectively as a

catalyst for a deepened faith. Did immigration spell re-centering?

Stumbling into a bigger Kingdom?

The immigration experience led not only to a deepening of faith but also to a gradually broadening of vision. When the immigrants managed to make some of those bucks, why did they not first build the grand houses in which many of us now live, nor even imposing church buildings? Some time ago, I read a booklet commemorating the 25th anniversary of the First Christian Reformed Church of London, Ontario. It described the first "worship services": four immigrant families huddling together for Sunday worship in the living room of Haagsma's farmhouse. At the appropriate moment a dinner plate was passed around to gather the meagre offerings. What was their first offering for? For a proper collection plates? For a communion set? For pulpit supply or at least for ordering some Dutch sermons for reading services? Or perhaps for a building fund for a modest worship-place? None of the above. The first collection was for "the [non-existent] Christian school." Was that an act of far-sighted faith? Had faith not only taken the driver's seat but come to function as compass?

The skeptic would suggest that the early Christian school initiative was an act, not so much of vision as of conservatism, seeking security by isolating their children from the surrounding Canadian culture. This suspicion is bolstered by the fact that the neighbors of the Haagsma's, we are told, "contacted the local Member of Provincial Parliament, who investigated the mysterious conspiracy!" Did immigration spell faith-vision or phobic protectionism?

The crate and the Kingdom

What about conservatism? The desperate need to hold on to some things that remained unchanged, some familiar patterns and practices, especially in one's faith and worship no doubt fostered the backward glance. Even so, was that all bad? Could it be that here too a negative — fear of an unfamiliar culture — turned into a positive, at least partially? The immigrants inadvertently packed into the big crate — along with the "kapstok," "borstrok," "dressoir," and "trap-orgel" — some unique gifts of the Calvinist tradition. A



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

conservative reaction to a strange society may have had the side effect of preserving some Kuyperian treasures that may otherwise have been lost.

Moreover, even if the primary intent may have been preservation, the result was more expansive. The preservation of that heritage provided a steady platform for launching Kingdom projects that hurtled far beyond self-preservation into unforeseen orbits of witness to the Good News of Christ's reign in Canada. I'm thinking of the establishment of the Christian Labour Association, Citizens for Public Justice, Christian day schools, the Institute for Christian Studies, Kings College, and Redeemer College. These ventures, even when initiated by a handful of visionaries (perhaps together with protectionists), caught the imagination of many.

While the immigrants may not have come here to seek first the Kingdom, perhaps the Holy Spirit backed them into something that looks somewhat like it. Did immigration spell maybe falteringly, Kingdom vision?

Beyond the crate: Canada

Is there something other that accounts for a certain faith-vitality among the heirs of the immigration, something that could not have been packed into the big crate that accompanied them from the Netherlands? Was the inherited tradition revitalized through contact with Canadian Evangelicalism, and, to a lesser extent, through collaboration with mainline and Roman Catholic churches?

Through personal friendships, cooperation in pro-life projects,

Between materialism and mission?

Before we slide or stride into triumphalism, sober self-reflection demands that we consider other dimensions of the emigration legacy. One wonders whether, for many of us, faith continues to play a largely undergirding role, still taking a back seat. Meanwhile, in the driver's seat, the quest for success and economic security keeps trucking along.

A Dutch minister was rather chagrined by the overly rosy picture of immigrant communities that I had presented in an internet discussion. He had spent many years here as an immigrant and pastor, and he continues to visit Canada regularly. He pointed not only to a stifling conservatism, but also to the materialism that in his view is rife in immigrant communities. I asked him and others to spell this out and eagerly await the response. But what of this? Regardless of whether the buck played first fiddle in the big move, is it now calling the tune for the heirs of immigration?

Or is the very image of fiddle and tune misplaced because there is no orchestra, no real community, but merely individual persons and particular groups doing their own thing? Can we avoid both the trap of individual introversion and the blight of liberal erosion? How do we get at these issues, candidly and lovingly?

In the midst of these vital questions, what about the deepest question: How do the heirs of the Dutch emigration experience God? Do we invoke God primarily as a supporter of our ventures — "Things go better with Jesus"? Or do we turn ever anew to God as the one who revitalizes and redirects us — together with all Christians — to seek first the Lord's communion and reign? Is Jesus Christ primarily one with whom we cultivate a personal relationship, as we run the rat race of daily life, or is he our life, our daily life, our bread and butter?

What is our witness? What do our neighbours see? Do they still see a "mysterious conspiracy," though as it turns out, a rather harmless one (no need to contact the local MPP)? Or do they see us, our way of life, our congregations, our schools as winsome and vibrant witnesses to the one Christian faith? In that case, the emigration crate may have provided some splintery planks for the Kingdom.

George Vandervelde teaches Systematic Theology at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

MUCH OF WHAT I READ disturbs me. If I were not a Christian, I would not know how to cope. I wonder how non-Christians who read and see the same news sources deal with the day-to-day events. It seems to me that for secular people the only way to face life with a degree of sanity is to live it up and push away any thoughts about tomorrow.

Carpe diem. Grab the day. Embrace it. Drink the cup to the full. How do people react to a recent essay in the *Globe and Mail* entitled "Civilization is a pyramid scheme"? How do you react to the following? "Studies of ancient climate show that the world's weather has been unusually stable since the end of the last Ice Age. We couldn't have invented farming earlier, even if we'd tried."

"Now we face evidence that civilization itself is destabilizing the long run of good weather on which it has grown."

It goes on to say that we, the world's elite, feed on local resources, anywhere in the world. When they are degraded, we move on to the next region and the next, until, in the end, we too become a casualty when our entire planetary pyramid has perished. (By the way, in the financial world a pyramid scheme is illegal because it uses funds from new contributors to pay previous investors, until the inevitable collapse.)

WE ALL KNOW THAT our present way of life eats up the whole world. The rate of exhaustion is such that we can observe it everywhere, whether that be the loss of wildlife, water,

coral reefs or rain forests. We are irrigating everywhere, even as clean water is disappearing. We are fishing everywhere even as stocks are depleting. No corner of the globe escapes our hemorrhage of waste. The author, at the end, asks: "Is the promise of prosperity for six billion the Big Lie of our time?" We also know that the question is the answer.

THE URGENCY OF OUR global situation was certainly not evident at the conventions of the two big political parties in the US. Neither Bush nor Gore spoke about the globalization issue, the main foreign policy plank for both and the lifeblood of business and entertainment, which finances the candidates. It seems that religion was the ticket. God was mentioned more often at these mass meetings than at a Billy Graham Crusade.

I saw the great evangelist recently on Larry King-CNN, who asked him point-blank: "What happens when you die?" Billy said: "Jesus will take me by the hand and bring me to God in heaven."

To me his answer sounded like bad theology. Paul says that God lives in inapproachable light whom nobody can see or has seen. And it also smacks of dualism, separating Jesus from God and heaven from earth. No wonder American religion and politics are so mixed up. Whether we get a Republican or a Democrat in the White House, either will pursue his peculiar dualistic faith commitment, confessing God with his mouth while religiously continuing the aims of capitalism and its Creative Destruction of

God's world.

Already much of Africa, most of East and South Asia as well as huge swaths of Latin America, including Mexico and Brazil have been hit head-on by the wave of our ferocious appetite, as we, as willing servants in our faithful fealty to the Prince of this world—in spite of our piety—serve two masters, a glaring example of dualism at work. In our own lives, too, this is so intertwined that it threatens to overwhelm us as well.

THE CENTRAL FOREIGN policy thesis of the Bush/Gore twins is that removing barriers to trade will increase the collective wealth of humanity (read the U.S.A.) and their basic philosophy is that, in spite of using the name of God with increasing frequency, not our spiritual state but our economic well-being is by far their most important consideration. Never mentioned outright, but implied and automatically understood is that native traditions, foreign cultural and religious values are primitive hangovers to be sacrificed to the god of Economic Growth, also known as Mammon.

Well, not everybody is buying this. Even though globalists regard nationalism as a nuisance, if we have learned anything in the previous century, it is that national loyalty is more important than class loyalty. Today we live in a period of wild prosperity. The globalists seem to have the upper hand. It will not last. What goes up must eventually come down, aggravated by that other wild card: environmental disruption. This year we have drought and fires in the west and too much water in the east. What will come next year?

AND THE WEATHER IS not the only problem. An economic downturn may be seriously worsened when, in the next few years, the Baby Boomers will retire and withdraw vast sums of money from the capital markets, creating a totally different economic climate. Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan are now operating on the fringe. I suspect that four years from now more people will listen to them. Then the debate over globalism will really be relevant.

ANOTHER CLEAR SIGN of the fallacy of dualism is the church, especially the Roman Catholic Church. Even though celibacy is clearly a human invention—and rather recent at that—and not a biblical given, the

Church of Rome is determined to maintain this unnatural state for their male-only clergy. A new book claims that the priesthood is becoming a gay profession. Rev. Donald Cozzens, the author, is president-rector and professor of Pastoral Theology at St. Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Cleveland, Ohio. He has a doctorate of psychology and his book, *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*, has become a real bombshell, splitting the church wide open.

The Vatican would like to sweep him and his book under the carpet, but they can't find a big enough carpet. The author claims that about 20,000 of the US's 32,000 priests have left the clergy to get married in recent years and many of those who remain are gay—more than half in some estimates, especially those under 40. The book has already sold out its initial print run of 20,000 copies, making it a best seller for its publisher, the Liturgical Press. As usual, the laity discusses this matter openly, but not the Catholic leadership, which, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, sees the clergy as asexual angels who alone can mediate access to God. As everywhere, here too we see the Revenge of History, increasingly evident wherever we look.

DR. COZZENS IS NOT THE only prominent Catholic criticizing the church. Garry Wills, a celebrated critic and essayist, and a practising Catholic, does this also in his book, *Papal Sin, Structures of Deceit*. Patiently and reverently, Wills lays bare the historical evolution of the modern papacy's position on such topics as clerical celibacy, the role of women, contraception and the relationship of the church with the Jewish people. In each case he traces how the truth has been sacrificed in order to strengthen the authority of the Pope.

Wills writes that, although the sins of the current crop of popes have not been as blatant as during the Renaissance, when murder and fornication was common, their actions, in denying the findings of biblical scholarship, in lacking common sense and simple charity, have been much more damaging to the people in the pew, because these papal ploys cause spiritual death and rejection of Christ who is the Truth. It amounts to advancing idolatry by substituting papal power for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Wills shows that in the past the church had no fixed

teaching about contraception, and that it was possible for priests to marry until the 13th century.

The rot set in with Pius IX who, in 1863, called an ecumenical council with the express purpose of declaring himself infallible. Now, with this fallible piece of church law on the books, it has become impossible to admit that the church had ever been guilty of error. Especially the celibacy rule has caused thousands of instances of sexual abuse, most of which go unacknowledged as the church becomes involved in a gigantic cover-up operation.

SO, HERE WE ARE: by all accounts fallible people worshipping in a fallible church. Yes, the churches of the Reformation are also fallible. Most churches show this fallacy by declaring their interpretation of the Bible infallible, by preaching the heresy of the Rapture or by perpetuating the Heaven myth. They do this because they don't like to have God on earth: too much of a nuisance. It might make him relevant to our lives and so question our lifestyle and cause us to live a more creation-loving existence. No, we'd rather have him in heaven, safely kicked upstairs (as large corporations do with a once valuable manager it no longer wants: give him a nice title, plenty of pay but no responsibilities) so that we can go our own way, apart from God, openly plundering his work of art.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT, also touching our daily life: in the US and Canada there are some 22 million acres (about 9 million hectares) or 35,000 square miles of manicured lawn, covering more land than any other crop. To keep them green and weed-free requires 10 times more chemical pesticides per acre than farmland plus 10,000 gallons of water per average yard.

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Bert Hielema has difficulty this year keeping the grass and flowers in check due to abundant rainfall this summer. He lives in Tweed, Ont.



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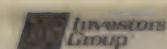
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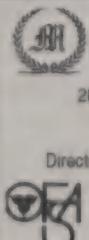
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	<h3>Anniversaries</h3> <p>Ezinge, Gr. Maple Ridge, B.C. the Neth. August 22 2000</p> <p>55th Wedding Anniversary</p> <p>PETRUS (PETER) HAMMING and JELTJE (JANE) HAMMING</p> <p>BURGLER</p> <p>With thankfulness to the Lord, we celebrated with our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We praise God for His goodness to us. <i>The Lord is our Shepherd</i>. Psalm 23. Home address: 20390 124B Ave., Maple Ridge, BC V2X 9R8</p>	<p>Andyk Oakville the Neth Ont.</p> <p>"Casting all your care upon Him for He careteth for you." (1 Pet.5:7)</p> <p>Suddenly at his home</p> <p>CORNELIS (CASEY) JONKER was taken into eternal glory on August 8, 2000, in his 67th year. Beloved husband of Stien (nee Van Schepen). Loving father of Martha, Rob, John, Gary. Dear grandfather of Mathew, Nicole, Alex. Dear son-in-law of Martha Van Schepen. He will be sadly missed by his brothers and sisters: Tina, Arie & Maartje, Dil, Lou & Gerne, Arie, Jan & Peta, Bonnie & Martin. Dear brother-in-law of Chris, Zwannie & Jerry, Anna, Don, Hugh & Tena, Hank & Evelyn, Bob & Jo-anne, John & Willie. Also missed by many nieces and nephews. The funeral service was conducted on August 12, 2000, at the Clarkson Christian Reformed Church in Mississauga, Ont., with pastor Gord Pols officiating. Jonker family address: 1120 Truman Ave., Oakville, ON L6H 1Y8</p>	<p>fourteen grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. A funeral service was held at Stratford Christian Reformed Church on July 22, with Rev. Martin Geleynse officiating. Correspondence address: Mrs. W. Van Drunen, 124 Charles St., Stratford, ON N5A 5X9</p>
	<p>1975 August 23 2000</p> <p>We joyfully announce the anniversary of our parents</p> <p>ART and NETTIE SNOEK who celebrated 25 years of love and faithfulness to each other. We thank the Lord for all the blessings he has given to our family: the times of laughter and joy, the times of quiet peace; and strength during the times of difficulty and sorrow.</p> <p>With love from your children: Glen (and Nicole), Rodney, Jackie, Ben, Katie. Home address: RR 1, Grafton, ON KOK 2G0</p>	<p>Katwijk, the Neth. Brampton, Ont. March 3, 1927 - August 9, 2000 After a very brief sickness, the Lord took unto Himself</p> <p>PETRONELLA (NEL) VANDERMEY (nee VANDERPERK) Beloved wife of Willem Albertus (Bill) Vandermeij for 47 years. Loving mother of: Bert Vandermeij & Linda Vandermeij & Huth Margaret Vandermeij & Art Van Spronsen Beloved Oma of: Juliana and Christina Vandermeij George, Adam, Jason and Amanda Van Spronsen She will also be sadly missed by four brothers and seven sisters, (ten of them still in the Netherlands), and many relatives and friends.</p> <p>"I know that my Redeemer liveth." The knowledge that she is gone to be with her Lord and Savior is our comfort.</p> <p>Funeral service was held in Rehoboth Fellowship Church, 800 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Etobicoke, Ont. on August 11, 2000. Rev. John Tenyenhuis officiated.</p> <p>Correspondence address: 35 Kingknull Dr., Apt 1305, Brampton, ON L6Y 5G5</p>	<p>NANNY IN THE NETHERLANDS — We are looking for a loving, fun, high-energy, self-confident person (over 21/non-smoker/good driver). We are an American-Dutch family near The Hague, with 4 children. Mom works part-time. Dad is a CEO. We speak English at home, Dutch in school. Begin November 1 for 1 yr. Private apt. and use of car. Previous happy <i>Christian Courier</i> nannies as ref. Contact Searl Vetter, Laan v. Koot 16E, 2244 AV Wassenaar, the Netherlands: searv@worldonline.nl</p>
	<h3>Thank You</h3> <p>With our children and grandchildren</p> <p>ART and JENNIE KAMMINGA would like to thank God for blessing us with 50 years of marriage. We celebrated on August 1, 2000, with family and friends from far and near with an Open House. We like to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who came, for flowers, cards and best wishes, and for making our day so special.</p> <p><i>Praise God from whom all blessings flow...</i></p>	<p>Beilen Strathroy the Neth. Canada</p> <p>1950 September 15 2000</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents</p> <p>RALPH and TINA TAMMING (nee SNOEYER)</p> <p>Congratulations Mom and Dad. With love from your children: Gaye & Case Nauta, Alice & Tony Dupuis, John & Manon Tamming, Joanne & Ed Kluczniak, Linda & Rob Rice. Fourteen grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Home address: 175 Carroll St., Strathroy, ON N7G 3P8</p>	<p>Help wanted</p> <p>Zwartsluis, deVelde the Neth.</p> <p>September 1</p> <p>Psalm 84</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord we announce the 50th Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents</p> <p>DERK and ANNIE VANDELVELDE (nee DEWILDE)</p> <p>With love from your children and grandchildren:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruby & Randy Huisman — Terrace, B.C. Henry & Susan VandeVelde — Hope, B.C. John & Hilde VandeVelde — Terrace, B.C. Bill & Trude VandeVelde — Kamloops, B.C. Jenny & Chris Wyssen — Kitwanga, B.C. Rolf & Sharon VandeVelde — Terrace, B.C. Dick & Corrina VandeVelde — Langley, B.C. JoAnn & Brian Slater — Victoria, B.C. Albert & Nancy VandeVelde — Terrace, B.C. Wilma & Keith VandenBroek — Houston, B.C. <p>and 28 grandchildren.</p> <p>Home address: 1-4603 Straume Ave., Terrace BC V8G 2C2</p>
	<h3>Engagement</h3> <p>VLEEMING/FERNHOUT Grace and John Vleeming and Hilda and Harry Fernhout are pleased to announce the engagement of their children.</p> <p>LISA JEANINE and JEFFREY STEPHEN We celebrate the gift of love God has given you!</p> <p>Address: 325 Estate Dr., Sherwood Park AB T8B 1L8</p>	<p>Truck driver (class A) from Ontario seeks local work in Chilliwack, B.C. and surrounding area. (14 years' experience). Contact Paul: 905-957-0636.</p>	<p>Job wanted</p>

News

After Pentecost and beyond Babel: Christian scholars loosen their tongues

Harry der Nederlanden

ANCASTER, Ontario — Redeemer University College was host in mid-August to two conferences that drew Christian scholars from around the world. The two met simultaneously and shared several of the main speakers.

One was called After Pentecost: Philosophy and Theology of Language and Biblical Interpretation, sponsored by the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education and the British and Foreign Bible Society. The other, The Open Book and Scholarship Conference, was sponsored by Redeemer, the Pascal Centre for Advanced Studies in Faith and Science, and the Dooyeweerd Centre for Christian Philosophy.

A surer foundation

The first of the two, After Pentecost, focused on how theories of language influence biblical interpretation. It was called a consultation rather than a conference because the scholars who participated were called together to work out strategies and ideas in concert that will put biblical interpretation on a surer foundation than the secular theories of language that most

scholars — Christian and non-Christian — work with now. So the participants were cloistered together for long periods hammering away at theories and problems most of us are only vaguely aware of; yet, the ideas they are wrestling with during these balmy summer days are having a huge impact in how theologians and preachers approach the biblical text, not just in the seminaries, but eventually in the pulpit.

This consultation was the second in a projected series of seven such intensive efforts to bring together leading evangelical scholars who are especially knowledgeable in those fields of scholarship that most influence how we understand the Bible. By the end, several of the key issues facing biblical scholars will have been discussed. The results of the first consultation will be published this fall.

The Open Book and Scholarship Conference was also the second one to be held. It provides a forum for many Christian scholars, including some graduate students, to present papers in several different disciplines. The focus of this year's conference was on metaphor, that is, the literary use of language to describe things



Nicholas Wolterstorff

figuratively rather than literally. Awareness of the power of language to shape how we think and act and even how we feel and experience reality has prompted enormous reflection with far-reaching consequences for all disciplines. At the heart of language is the capacity to use words in new and surprising ways that shift meanings from one application to another.

Language shapes all we do

Such studies have long been the province of poets and critics, but over the last several decades not just philosophers and theologians but even sociologists and

physicists have begun toying with the notion that how language "pictures" the world to us shapes everything we think and do, so much so that there's no getting behind our different languages to a common, shared world. Most of the papers presented in the workshops worried about the edges of this topic in some way.

Beside the six plenary sessions in which everyone assembled to hear the "major" speakers, there were six periods devoted to workshops in which nearly 40 papers were presented. A typical participant heard about twenty different papers and the discussions that followed. Bernadette Rule, Hugh Cook and John Terpstra provided a change of pace by reading from their poetry and stories.

The main or plenary speakers were Craig Bartholomew, Mike Goheen, Anthony Thiselton, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Roy Clouser, and Daniel F.M. Strauss. To list all their titles and qualifications and the titles of their papers would fill half this page and probably not mean very much to you. It would also suggest that what was presented in the workshops was relatively minor, which isn't true. One of the papers that spoke most powerfully to me was actually one given in one of the smaller workshop sessions, and I suspect that was the case for many other participants as well. Today it is

difficult as a scholar to explain how language can open beyond what we make of the world to what God makes and will make of us and the world. Blomberg, Thiselton and Wolterstorff, each in unique and academically responsible ways, pointed scholars — Christian scholars in particular but all scholars — to how we can continue to understand language and reality in ways that enable us to hear the voice of God calling us to respond to him and to our neighbor.

To sponsor conferences like this takes huge amounts of planning and considerable resources, but they are a great gift to those who attend, for nowhere is the power of secularism stronger than in the world of scholarship. With advanced education becoming increasingly important in our society, it is more urgent than ever before for the people of God to challenge the principalities and powers on this level.

The Reformed community has provided strong leadership in this area and that is good to see. It is even more encouraging to see that excellent Christian scholarship is coming from all across the spectrum of Christian denominations — from the Anglicans to the Mennonites. The church faces huge challenges in the millennium ahead, but God has blessed it richly with faithful intellectual leaders.

Xu Yongze released from labor camp

(Compass) — China's most famous house church prisoner, Mr. Xu Yongze, is free. The 58-year-old founder of the Born Again movement was released on May 16, after serving a three-year "re-education through labor" sentence for establishing an illegal organization in China.

Xu revealed that he was tortured during interrogation

sessions. Three weeks after his release, he told a friend in Beijing that once he had each arm handcuffed to an iron gate, and when the gates were opened, he was stretched up off the ground in a gruesome crucifix position.

He expressed his appreciation for the international pressure that was put on the Chinese government to treat him fairly. He

served his sentence in a labor camp where each prisoner had to string 2,500 Christmas tree bulbs every day with a thin wire.

Xu was originally arrested on March 16, 1997, when police raided a meeting of house church leaders in central China. Xu is now recovering in Nanyang city, in Henan province.

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- ✓ Christian Fellowship Dinner: Thursdays 5:30 p.m., beginning on Sept. 21
- ✓ Wilderness Retreat: Sept. 22-24
- ✓ Spirituality Retreat at St. Paul's Anglican Church: Sat., Sept. 30, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- ✓ Monthly Film Discussions: Beginning Oct. 3
- ✓ Monthly Brown Bag Lunch Discussions: Beginning Oct. 4
- ✓ A Day with JEAN VANIER: Sat., Oct. 28

WORSHIP DIRECTOR First Christian Reformed Church of Abbotsford, B.C.

is seeking a part-time worship director with a Reformed Christian perspective to help plan & lead blended worship and to encourage and develop members' gifts for leading worship. For info/application form contact (by Sept 30):

Search Committee

c/o First CRC

Box 485, Abbotsford BC V2S 5Z5

phone/fax 604-859-5908

e-mail abby1crc@uniserve.com

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

Event

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For registration information contact your
deacons, or Diaconal Ministries
at (905) 336-2920

**Plus....
Friday October 20****"How then shall we lead?"**

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church

9:00 - 4:00 Cost \$40

A special conference for all of those in leadership roles in the church (paid or unpaid). There will be 12 practical workshops on all aspects of leadership. For a brochure, contact your deacons or call Marlene at 1(800)730-3490.

**"Ken Medema in Concert"
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7:30 pm Cost \$10 (\$8 Student/Senior)

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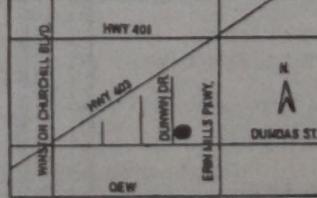
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seeks a full-time principal effective August 2001. KCS is a parent-run JK-Grade 8 school in its 37th year of operation. There are 10 teachers serving a diverse multi-denominational student body of approximately 215 students. KCS is affiliated with the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools and Christian Schools International. We seek an experienced candidate who desires to work in a diverse community, provide strong leadership, encourage teamwork, and implement a vision of Christian education that encourages students to develop their gifts and talents, and challenges them to serve Christ in all areas of life.

Kingston is a beautiful university town (pop. 150,000) situated on the shores of Lake Ontario.

Please send resume, statement of personal faith, philosophy of Christian education and references to:

Principal Search Committee

Kingston Christian School

1212 Woodbine Road

Kingston ON K7L 4V2

phone: 613-384-9572

fax: 613-384-9580

Application Deadline: September 30, 2000

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The Search Committee

c/o Anita Beem

29850 N. Bedford

Southfield MI 48076

phone: 248-559-2806

e-mail: Wbeam@aol.com

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fax: 905-945-1211

We thank all applicants, but only those considered will be contacted.

Events/Classifieds**Calendar of Events**

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Sept. 16 Opening of Tollendale Village, Phase 1, Simcoe County Chr. Senior Home Inc., 11 a.m., Barrie, Ont. (See ad in this issue).

Sept. 16 "Life After Carismania," free seminar with Ted Brooks, Fantasyland Hotel - Conference Centre, West Edmonton Mall. For info call Victoria Life Church, Westlock Alta. 1-800-816-8378.

Sept. 17 A Special 50th Anniversary Worship, 10 a.m., First CRC, Toronto, Ont. For more information of Anniversary celebrations, call 416-481-4912.

Sept. 22-28 Christian Male Choir Emmeloord concert, Sept. 22: 8 p.m., Ladner CRC, 4594-54A St., Delta, B.C.; Sept. 23: 8 p.m., CRC, Duncan, B.C.; Sept. 24: 8 p.m., Christ Community Church, 2221 Bowen Rd., Nanaimo, B.C.; Sept. 26: 8 p.m., CRC 430 Madsen Rd., Kelowna, B.C.; Sept. 28: 8 p.m., First New Westminster CRC, 13th Ave., Burnaby, B.C.

Oct. 1 Dutch service, 3 p.m., Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, Ancaster, Ont. - Rev. J. Hoytema preaching.

Oct. 7-8 Thanksgiving weekend 50th Anniversary celebrations, First CRC, Toronto, Ont. For more information, call 416-481-4912.

Oct. 7-8 First CRC of Barrie, Ont. 50th Anniversary celebrations. Thanksgiving dinner and program on Saturday, Services at 10:30 a.m. & 7 p.m. on Sunday. For more info, call 705-734-9166.

Oct. 7-9 Thanksgiving weekend 50th Anniversary celebrations, First CRC of Rocky Mountain House, Alta. For more information, call 403-845-6067.

Oct. 9-15 First CRC of Abbotsford, B.C. 50th Anniversary Celebrations. Call 604-859-5908(ad July 10 issue)

Oct. 11 The First CRC of Ladner B.C. - 50th Anniversary Service - 8 p.m., Delta, B.C.

Oct. 14-15 Essex CRC, 50th Anniversary; Oct. 14: Fellowship Supper 5:30 p.m.; Oct. 15: Service of Praise and Thanksgiving 10 a.m. Essex, Ont. (See display ad in this issue.)

Oct. 20 Canadian Chr. Education Foundation, 25th Anniversary Celebrations at Hamilton Place, Hamilton, Ont. 7:30 p.m. (Doors open 6:30 p.m.) 1000 voice student mass choir, Andre Knevel, organist; Liselotte Fennema, panflutist; Laura Pin, pianist. Free admission, free-will offering. (See display ad Oct. 2 issue.)

Oct. 20 "How then shall we lead?" Ancaster CRC, Ancaster, Ont. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Special day for those in leadership roles in church. 12 workshops. (See Diaconal Ministries ad in this issue)

Oct. 20 Ken Miedema in concert. Redeemer College auditorium, Ancaster, Ont. 7:30 p.m. (See Diaconal Ministries ad in this issue.)

Oct. 21 Day of Encouragement and training, Hamilton District Chr. High School, Ancaster, Ont. Call Diaconal Ministries at 1-800-730-3490. (See ad in this issue.)

Oct. 28-29 50th Anniversary First CRC, London, Ont.; Oct. 28: Celebration Banquet; Oct. 29: Special Worship Service. (See display ad in this issue.)

Oct. 28-29 First CRC of Kingston, Ont. 50th Anniversary Celebrations. (See ad in Aug. 21 issue).

Nov. 3 Christian Festival Concert under the direction of Leendert Kooij, Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto. \$25/\$20/\$15 Call 416-636-9779. (See ad in July 24 issue of CC.)

Nov. 11-12 First CRC of Lethbridge, Alta. 50th Anniversary celebrations. Call Anne Bosma at 403-328-9985 for more info.

Nov. 17 First CRC of Thunder Bay, Ont. - 50th Anniversary celebration dinner and program. For dinner reservations or more information, call Audrey Grootenboer at 807-935-2778.

THANK GOD FOR FIFTY YEARS OF BLESSINGS!**ESSEX CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
50TH ANNIVERSARY**

Fellowship Supper and Reminiscences
Saturday, Oct. 14 at 5:30 p.m.

Service of Praise and Thanksgiving
Sunday, Oct. 15 at 10 a.m.

All friends and former members are cordially invited to join in our celebrations.

If you plan to attend the Saturday dinner and celebrations, please contact the church secretary at 519-776-5071, or e-mail: essexcrc@jet2.net., or Mr. H. Mulder at 519-776-5161

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

First CRC of London, Ontario
is celebrating "50 Years of God's Love Shining."

Sunday, October 22, 2000

Rededication of the newly renovated sanctuary

Saturday, October 28, 2000

Celebration Banquet

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Special worship services
(Former pastors participating)

Former members are especially invited to attend.
For more information and banquet tickets (\$20),
e-mail: Church Administrator wilma@skynet.ca
or call 519-432-7997.

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**THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF PHASE 1 OF
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Saturday, September 16, 2000
11 a.m.

Please join us on this special occasion as we celebrate the completion of the First Phase of our Christian Retirement Community.

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News

Commission suggests new definition of marriage

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA — A report from the Law Commission of Canada suggests that Ottawa consider abolishing the concept of marriage, at the state level, replacing it with registered domestic partnerships (RDPs).

The commission, established in July 1997, is an independent law reform agency responsible to Parliament, and has as its mission: "to engage Canadians in the renewal of the law to ensure that it is relevant, responsive, effective, equally accessible to all, and just."

The commission's discussion paper, called "Recognizing and Supporting Close Personal Relationships Between Adults," focuses on relationships other than marriage which involve people living together in a mutually supportive situation. Examples of this include gay couples, and non-married relatives who share a household.

With its paper, the commission challenges the federal government to include other relationships besides marriage in its laws. It suggests that Parliament "could redefine civil marriage to include relationships that are excluded at present. It could supplement or replace the concept of marriage with a system of civil registration of relationships."

Commitment to intimacy

Close personal relationships can be a vague term, but the commission sees such relationships as involving "interdependence — whether physical, emotional, economic or spiritual — and the commitment to intimacy — once again whether physical, emotional or spiritual."

In several passages, the document makes strong suggestions toward churches about how they should treat people such as gay couples. One passage says: "A religious congregation that permits same-sex marriages can give great



Bruce Voogt

emotional support to such couples." Elsewhere, the document states: "Presently, there is one situation where there is a call for a secular definition of marriage that departs significantly from most religious definitions — the recognition of same-sex marriages. Much of the opposition to expanding the entitlement to marry in this manner comes from religious organizations that feel that Parliament should not have the right to redefine a concept that, they argue, was originally a religious one."

Later on, the document introduces the concept of RDPs, as an alternative to civil marriage. It is here that the commission challenges the traditional concept of marriage: "The co-existence of civil marriage and domestic partnership regimes may not, however, fully address the symbolic concerns of those who now seek to have same-sex marriages recognized. As long as same-sex couples are not entitled to marry, they argue, the registered domestic partnership regime would just be giving them a second-class status. For this reason, it may be that the registered domestic partnership regime is a viable option for Parliament only if at the same time it abolishes the concept of civil marriage, and requires couples married in a religious ceremony to register their status as domestic partners, just as they now must do

to have the marriage recognized by the state."

The commission suggests that references to married couples in Canada's laws are no longer adequate, because of changes in close relationships in Canadian society. "Many Canadian laws now use the concepts of marriage and spouse as a way of targeting policies and programs to support close personal relationships," says the document. "It is obvious that they are no longer adequate to achieve Parliament's purposes."

The paper is "a commission document," co-authored by the five members of the commission, explains spokesperson Lucie Gagne. Although it has been submitted to government representatives, there have been "no comments yet from officials," Gagne told *Christian Courier*. She noted that "consultations will take place in fall with the general public and targeted publics." The commission is looking for input on the document and invites people to post comments on its webpage: www.lcc.gc.ca.

Good discussion starter

Bruce Voogt, of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), calls the document "a really good discussion starter." Asked if he sees a particular agenda behind the document, Voogt says, "I don't know what their motives are," but he sees the document as "very balanced."

CPJ has dealt with the subject of registered domestic partnerships (RDPs) in one of its policies, but Voogt says the Law Commission did not consult CPJ about its paper. "We introduced that concept in our paper, but it's a concept used in Europe for years."

Rather than portraying marriage as outdated, Voogt says "I read the document as still seeing marriage as valuable." Voogt says he and CPJ believe "the terms marriage and spouse need to be reserved for heterosexual relationships." He sees the best public policy approach as keeping marriage and introducing the

concept of RDPs.

So far, CPJ hasn't responded to the report, but Voogt asserts, "I think we need to have a serious look at this document."

Conscientious objectors

Janet Epp Buckingham, general legal counsel for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), is critical of the report's suggestion about abolishing marriage. "It certainly seems that is where it is going," she notes. "While it is possible for the state to do this kind of thing [abolishing marriage], it has caused a lot of hardship for religious communities [where it has happened]."

If Parliament introduced RDPs, some people might choose to become "conscientious objectors" to the new system, and say, "I am married and I don't want to have an RDP." But Epp Buckingham does not expect Parliament to abolish marriage at the state level.

She argues that Canada's government "defines marriage in a way that is not reflective of a theological viewpoint.... The secular view of marriage has evolved from the religious institution of marriage." Because state marriage developed from religious marriage, religious institutions need to have ongoing input about it, and "will have a lot to say about this."

Epp Buckingham says she believes Attorney General Anne McLellan asked the Law Commission to write this report. She knows Natalie Desrosiers, a key member of the commission, and says, "It's clear to me she wrote quite a bit of it. She's your typical libertarian thinker." Looking at the content of the report, Epp Buckingham says, "I don't see a particularly gay agenda behind it. There's definitely a liberal agenda behind it."

She agrees with the report's writers that Canada's system of family benefits needs to be updated. "I thought it was interesting to see a broadening of benefits... We're looking at a situation where there has been societal change.... A lot of these benefits only date back to the '60s," she notes. "At the time that 'marriage' and 'spouse' were used as a category for benefits, it seems that benefits were granted on the concept of one breadwinner." But soon after that, two-income families and common-law marriages became more common, so "the whole ideology very quickly became out of date," she asserts.

So far, EFC has not taken a position on RDPs, except that they should be based on economic dependence rather than sexual intimacy, says Epp Buckingham.

News Digest

Baptism with fire hose

NEW YORK, N.Y. (Religion Today) — Five hundred people were baptized by fire hose on a hot New York City street in August. They arrived from the neighborhood and by bus from Washington, Boston, and Philadelphia and, dressed in white, gathered in the middle of an East Harlem street to be sprayed, reports the *New York Times*.

A United House of Prayer for All People church official turned on the hose, attached to a city hydrant, and water shot high into the air, raining down in a cool spray for 15 minutes. Some congregants danced to music while others dropped to the ground praying. The church has held the mass baptisms each summer since 1937.

Website terminated

VICTORIA, B.C. — Arnold Schwarzenegger has forced a website to terminate a commercial. The site, set up by the Canadian Web company Zero One Design, shows Japanese TV commercials made by celebrities such as Schwarzenegger. The one in question shows him playing several characters, including a reporter, a politician, and his Terminator role.

Zero One removed the ad after receiving a cease-and-desist order from DirecTV and Dentsu, the Japanese company which produced the commercial. They claimed the site infringed Schwarzenegger's intellectual-property rights. But because of resulting publicity, the site has been receiving many more visits.

Confessing to a cop

NEWARK, N.J. (Religion Today) — People can confess a crime confidentially to a clergyman, but what if the cleric also is a policeman?

David Carey confessed that he had shot and killed a man in a Newark, New Jersey, fast-food restaurant, reports the *National Law Journal*. He made the revelation to John Perry, a deacon at Second Baptist Church of Belleville, N.J. Perry also is a state trooper, and arrested Carey.

When the case got to court, Perry's status as a policeman confused the issue. Parishioners enjoy the cleric-penitent privilege, but attorneys questioned whether Perry fit the definition of the term "clergy," since he was a deacon, not the senior pastor. The New Jersey court ruled that Carey could not claim the cleric-penitent privilege.

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